



Common Ground

Collaboration and shared leadership in systems serving Nebraska's youngest children

Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) Biennial Report to the Governor 2016-2018

Overview

The Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Council (ECICC) was established in 2000 to advise and assist state agencies as required in the Early Intervention Act, Quality Child Care Act, and other state endeavors in early care and education.* It is comprised of parents, early childhood professionals, state agency leadership, as well as representatives from business, public health, higher education and community organizations.

The ECICC is focused on advancing Nebraska's future viability by addressing the needs of young children from the prenatal years through age 8. All children need nurturing experiences to succeed in learning and life. However, many young children face developmental delays, disabilities or socio-economic challenges to their potential for lifelong success. This wider range of challenges includes limited access to well-child healthcare, high-quality early care and learning opportunities and other multifaceted issues.

Fortunately, Nebraska has a long-standing commitment to develop its most precious resource—its children.

Every biennium, the ECICC submits its report to the Governor on the status of early childhood in Nebraska according to the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council Act.

This report addresses five key areas related to early childhood care and education, highlights successes in each area and offers recommendations for the coming biennium. Additional data and highlights from specific programs can be found in the appendices.

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*Relevant statutes: (Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-3401 Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council; (Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-2501 to 43-2516) Early Intervention Act; (Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-2601 to 43-2625) Quality Child Care Act; and (Neb. Re. Stat. 79-1101 to 79-1104) Early Childhood Education Act.



Coordinated Systems Deliver Greater Efficiency

Early childhood programs are strongly encouraged to work closely together in developing and deploying services for young children.

Authentic collaboration typically reduces duplication of services, maximizes the use of available resources and creates greater accountability for public dollars.

These efficiencies also improve communities of practice for teachers, enhance parent networking and result in better outcomes for young children.



Using Federal Dollars to Promote Quality Services

The Federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was reauthorized by Congress in 2014. The reauthorization of the grant has resulted in some changes to state regulations. This has provided an opportunity to revise programs and services in Nebraska's Child Care Development Fund State Plan.

These regulations promote higher quality in licensed early childhood education and care programs through specific training requirements, greater collaboration at the community and state level and increased parent support.

Introduction

Collaboration and Shared Leadership: Keys to Early Childhood in Nebraska

Early Childhood in Nebraska is elevated through the belief and practice that coordination and collaboration among programs and services are best for young children and their families. State and local leadership create opportunities for planning that result in less duplication of effort and maximize all available resources.

Coordination between agencies and organizations also ensure greater access, availability, and affordability of quality early childhood experiences for families with young children. Greater sustainability in programs and services occur more often when people work together. Regardless of challenges that exist in various sectors of the state, there are dedicated individuals all across Nebraska's unique landscape capitalizing on its cultural and demographic diversity and unique, resourceful communities.

Together, state agencies and local communities are doing their best to create a system of support to meet the comprehensive needs of our youngest citizens.

I: Quality

Young children who receive high quality programs and services have better developmental, health, and learning outcomes. Through ongoing expansion of early childhood efforts, such as home visitation, public school early childhood programs, infant-toddler programs and services, and Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, a growing number of young children have access to quality early learning and development services. Efforts to measurably increase quality in all types of early childhood programs and services are helping Nebraska's young children realize positive outcomes.

What's Working Well?

Focusing on infants, toddlers and their families:

- Infants and toddlers in Nebraska have greater access to quality programs through Sixpence, a public-private endeavor operated by public school districts. Federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships also offer increased access to quality programs and comprehensive services.
- Public information is available on participation and quality rating of licensed child care programs across the state. Step Up to Quality legislation requires information and resources to be made available for parents and community members. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) collaborate to administer the program statewide.

Fundamentally, child care programs in both centers and family child care homes provide basic safety and care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through regulations in health and safety.

Access to higher quality programs has expanded as more providers complete training in the *Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards* and also participate in Step Up to Quality. Families who are income eligible may apply for assistance in paying for licensed care while the parent works or attends training and education to better prepare for the workforce and support their families.

Children with Disabilities

According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, providers of care for a child with a disability may charge in excess of the rates indicated on the Child Care Subsidy Rate chart [Source: Child Care for Children with Disabilities, Aged and Disabled Waiver Service. See Appendix, 392 Nebraska Administrative Code 000-203]. This depends on the type of provider and setting. The cost for child care for a child with disabilities is fluid and difficult to pinpoint in comparison to the rates for a typically developing child.

In calendar year 2017, there were 4,974 infants and toddlers verified with a disability or developmental delay that had an open case in the Early Development Network (Nebraska's Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act—IDEA), many of whom need quality care throughout the year [Source: DHHS Early Development Network]. Approximately 40% of all preschool children being served by public schools have been verified for special education services.



Testimonial: Finding child care for children with special needs

"I called a few daycares...and after I told them [my child's] medical needs they said they would have to speak with their supervisor and call me back. Same as a few months ago, I never got called back.

It seems that when care providers find out that your child has extra medical needs they don't feel comfortable caring for them and don't have the heart to tell you.

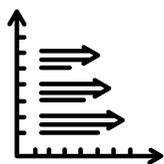
When [my child] was younger, she was very medically involved. While we did have Medicaid, we did not have the benefit of a waiver program yet. My sister cared for her every day, making sure she was on her oxygen, checking her sats, administering medications and feedings through her G-tube, and giving her breathing treatments.

She provided all of this care so I could continue working. I always felt that she deserved more pay, we couldn't afford to pay her more than we were already paying. She never asked for more. I just knew she deserved it.

I think all of these issues combined are very familiar issues for Special Needs families. While we want to work and contribute to society, it's a continual struggle to find competent compassionate care givers that we can afford.

There needs to be more options available for families like ours. We are working middle class folks with a kiddo that needs more attention than the average child. We deserve to work outside our home while knowing our child is in good hands."

—Jamie C., ECICC
Parent Representative



Children with Special Needs

Public school early childhood programs serve approximately 18,500 children ages birth to kindergarten entrance age.

45% of those children received special education services and 2% were English Language Learners. Over 43% qualified for free or reduced lunch [Source: NDE Early Childhood Report: <https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ECE-Long-Report-16-17.pdf>].

Public School Programs

Public school early childhood programs continue to develop. These programs, regulated by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE, Rules 11, 51, 52), hire certificated teachers with teaching endorsements in both early childhood education, early childhood special education or inclusive education.

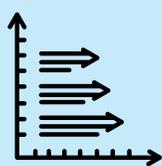
Coordination and collaboration among the Early Development Network (EDN), Head Start grantees, school district programs, and other community programs and services is important to provide quality learning and development experiences for all children.



Head Start and Title I Funds

Revisions in the federal Department of Education's Every

Student Succeeds Act requires public school districts receiving Title I funds, regardless of whether they operate a preschool program, to develop transition agreements with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood programs in the community [Section 1119(a)].



Children Served by Head Start & Early Head Start

Over 5,200 of Nebraska's young

children living in poverty are served by federally funded programs: Head Start (17), Early Head Start (17) and Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships (3).

In FY2018 programs had over 700 formal agreements with public schools and other community agencies to support the delivery of comprehensive, inclusive services and developmentally appropriate school readiness learning experiences for children living in poverty, as well as support services for their families. This includes three American Indian Head Start and Early Head Start Programs administered by tribes on reservations in Macy, Santee Sioux, and Winnebago.

Children with disabilities, developmental delays, or other risk factors benefit greatly when public schools work with other community programs and services [See Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Act, Nebraska Annual Performance Report, education.ne.gov/sped/data-reporting/].

Public-Private Collaboration: Sixpence Early Learning Fund

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education Endowment Fund, also known as Sixpence, has shifted the odds for infants and toddlers at risk toward better developmental outcomes. An innovative collaboration and investment model, Sixpence combines public and private sector resources to provide funding and enhance the quality and efficiency of early learning and development services offered in communities statewide. Sixpence programs are administered by public school grantees and must meet rigorous quality standards. Programs in Sixpence Child Care Partnerships must also participate in Step Up to Quality [See singasongofsixpence.org].

Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Nebraska collaborate with local entities to provide opportunities for children whose families are income eligible. Hallmarks of Head Start include child and family development, comprehensive medical and dental screenings, professional development, and partnerships within communities.

These programs focus on transitions from preschool to kindergarten, supporting young children and their families in a community context. Head Start grantees and their partners operate with federal comprehensive standards that align with state early childhood standards. These grantees are subject to monitoring by a regularly scheduled federal review team. Head Start grantees are required to have formal agreements with public schools to provide services for children with a disability or developmental delay and to facilitate children's transition to kindergarten.

Early Childhood Social-Emotional Development

Investments in the school readiness of Nebraska's youngest, most vulnerable children have been shown to strengthen families, communities and the quality of life in Nebraska. Programs such as the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young



Progress in Tribal Communities

In the spring of 2018, the Omaha Tribe celebrated the opening of their first Early Head Start program in Macy, NE, with a cedar ceremony to bless the new center. They received one of four grants provided nationwide in the fall of 2017.

The grant provided funding for construction of a new building, startup expenses and continual operation costs. The center-based program provides full-day, comprehensive child development for 32 low-income infants and toddlers, and support services for their families and eligible pregnant women and their families.

Children (Pyramid Model) in public school and Head Start settings help in early childhood development.

Services offered through Rooted in Relationships and Nurturing Healthy Behaviors through child care and Early Head Start programs ensures more children birth-5 are receiving support for their emotional development. These programs are also engaged in the implementation of the Pyramid Model working with a leadership team to scale up these efforts statewide.

Home Visitation Services

Home visitation programs and services such as the Nebraska Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV) Program are community coalitions that coordinate resources and jointly plan and provide comprehensive support in a home-based approach.

The Nebraska DHHS, Division of Lifespan Health, assesses home visitation quality and collects data on six constructs: 1) maternal and newborn health; 2) child injuries, abuse, neglect, and maltreatment and emergency department; 3) school readiness and achievement; 4) crime or domestic violence; 5) family economic self sufficiency; and 6) coordination and referrals for other community resources and supports.

From January 1, 2016, through September 2018, 759 families have participated in the federal/state MIECHV sites. There are 6 local programs covering 21 counties. Data shows families are making gains in all benchmark areas [Source: dhhs.ne.gov/homevisiting].

Other programs such as Sixpence, Early Head Start and Head Start have the option to provide home-based services to families with young children to address their comprehensive needs and connect them to appropriate community resources.

Looking Forward: 2018-2020

Recommendation: Train professionals in all early childhood programs in the knowledge and support of young children's growth and development using the seven domains of the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines

- Distribute new *Early Learning Guidelines* to providers of home visiting, maternal/child health, and child care food programs to equip them with knowledge and resources.
- Work with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Child and Adult Care Food Program to disseminate materials and coordinate training among schools and child care provider networks.



Risk Factors Affecting Young Children

Greater risks exist for young children

representing populations and geographical areas that are under-represented and under-served. Additional developmental supports are often needed for children in high-stress, high-poverty and high-crime sectors.

- Minority populations based on race and ethnicity (such as American Indian families/communities)
- Families experiencing extreme poverty or homelessness
- Children in foster care or adoptive situations
- Children of families of refugee/immigrant status
- Children of migrant/seasonal agricultural workers
- Children of parents who are English Language Learners

Nearly 14% of all Nebraska's children live below the federal poverty level. In 2017, the NDE Office of Early Childhood created a training for early childhood professionals on "Working with Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness" to meet federal requirements. Over 150 professionals participated in the training course in 2018.



School Readiness tax Credits

In 2016, the Nebraska Legislature passed the School Readiness Tax Credit Act [LB889]. The legislation was designed to provide financial incentives for child care providers to continue their professional development and enhance the caliber of their services, thereby improving the developmental outcomes of the children in their programs. community [Section 1119(a)].

As of the 2019 Legislative Session, lawmakers are working on improvements to the School Readiness Tax Credit Act to make these incentives more available to Nebraska's early childhood professionals.

II: Professional Development

The availability of a well-trained and educated early childhood professional directly correlates to quality of programs and services thereby increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes for young children. Increased access to college coursework and high-quality continuing education and training expands the knowledge and expertise of providers, teachers, and caregivers.

What's Working Well?

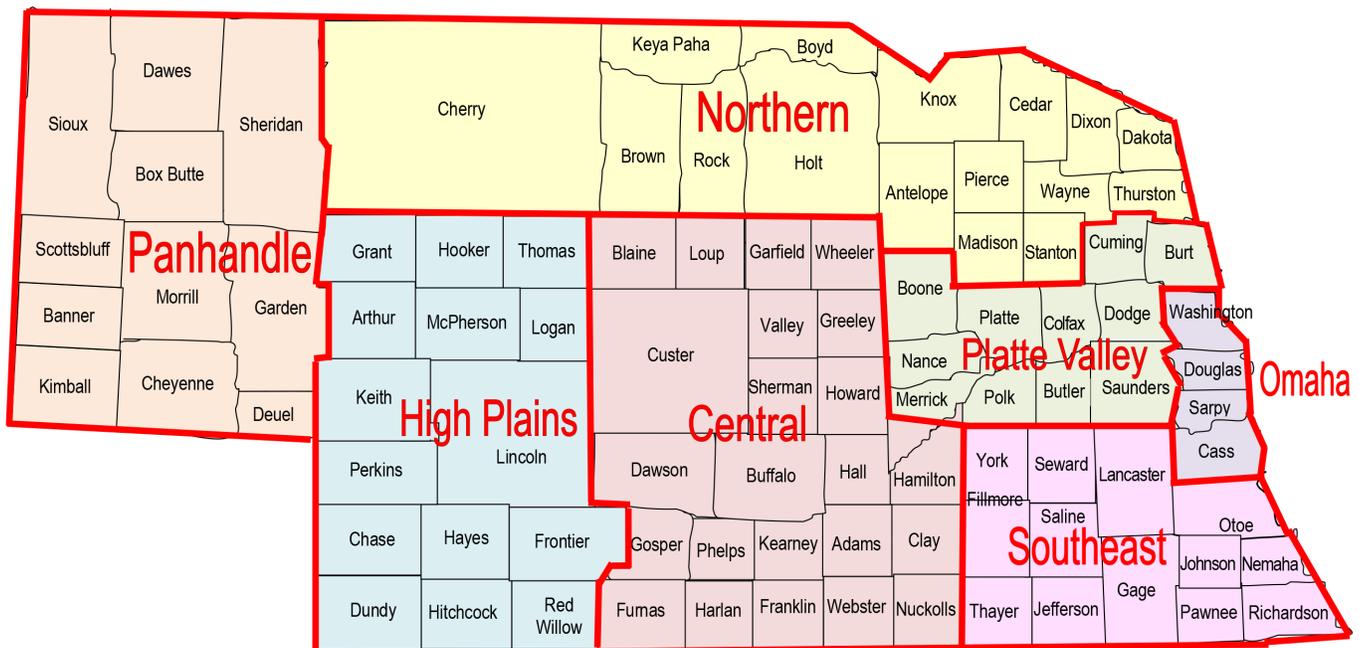
Strengthening our efforts to recruit, train and retain enough highly skilled early childhood professionals to meet statewide needs

- Nebraska's early childhood professionals have greater access to quality professional development and training than ever before. Over 8,000 professionals attended one or more of 486 training events in 2016-17. Various distance learning options are also available.

Early Learning Connections

The Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services jointly plan professional development and training for early childhood professionals. Efforts are largely coordinated by the Nebraska Department of Education's Early Childhood Training Center housed at Educational Service Unit 3 in LaVista. Regional Early Learning Connection (ELC) Coordinators are housed in Educational

Regional Early Learning Connections Partnerships



Service Units across the state. These are strategically located to maximize access to and availability of professional development among public schools, institutions of higher education, licensed child care programs, and Federal Head Start agencies. Planning Region Teams are also formal partners to focus on services and supports to young children with disabilities and their families.

Every year, ELCs collect and analyze training needs to inform priorities and plans for coordinating and conducting training for all early childhood professionals. The ELCs are anchored by the NDE Early Childhood Training Center to ensure access to appropriate curriculum, coaching supports, and media and library resources to support the transfer of learning for adults who work with young children.

Step Up to Quality

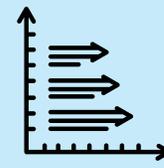
Step Up to Quality, Nebraska's child care quality rating and improvement system, offers quality enhancements and tax incentives to participating programs. Standards and indicators in areas of professional development, environments, parent engagement, and health provide the framework for the five-step levels model.

These incentives and supports help stabilize the early childhood workforce, contribute to the local economy, and increase quality experiences for children through educated and well-trained professionals.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

One of Nebraska's successful workforce endeavors is T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, Nebraska. T.E.A.C.H.® Early Childhood® is a scholarship and wage enhancement program administered by the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC).

T.E.A.C.H.® is a nationally designed program that offers scholarships for college tuition for early childhood education and care providers so they can access two and four year early childhood education degree programs in Nebraska institutions of higher education. It is a pivotal strategy toward a more stable and knowledgeable early childhood workforce. Funds for this effort come from public and private entities, training fees, and fundraising [Source: nebraskaeyc.org/teach-early-childhoodreg.html].



Step Up to Quality: A Pathway for Continuous Improvement

As of November 15, 2018, 611 child care centers and family home providers were enrolled in Step Up to Quality. Enrollment is the first phase of participation in the system. Providers are eligible to receive their quality ratings once they have fully completed the onboarding process.

Providers advance to higher quality ratings as they access supports offered through Step Up to Quality and demonstrate measurable progress in:

- Curriculum, learning environments and teacher-child interactions
- Child outcomes
- Professional development and training
- Family engagement and partnerships
- Program administration

As of the production of this report, 384 providers have been rated on the program's 5-step scale, and 103 programs have received a rating of Step 3 or higher.



Professional Development Through T.E.A.C.H.®

In 2016-18, nearly 300 early childhood professionals representing Step Up to Quality, Head Start/ Early Head Start, licensed child care and other programs completed a total of 3,380 semester credit hours as part of their T.E.A.C.H.® participation. The scholarship recipients averaged 16.5 credit hours per year while working full-time in an early childhood program.



Early Childhood Workforce Commission

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute

launched the Early Childhood Workforce Commission represented statewide by stakeholders from State Agencies and other regional and local programs, schools, and business communities.

Under the leadership of Dr. Susan Sarver, the Commission has identified needs for building a strong infrastructure and increasing availability of early childhood professionals to meet the demands, in particular, of those children most vulnerable and at risk of learning, physical, and developmental delays.

The Commission is focused on partnerships with Nebraska's public and private institutions of higher education in early childhood degree preparation programs to support development of professional competencies and career pathways in early care and education.

[See buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/our-work/workforce-development/survey for additional information regarding the Commission's goals and activities].

Coordination Between Higher Education Programs

Many students in early childhood degree programs are benefitting from efforts to align coursework in community colleges and better access through online courses.

Articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions of higher education have added value statewide for those seeking a Baccalaureate degree in an early childhood or related program.

Over the years, access to coursework in Nebraska institutions of higher education has expanded via satellite campuses. Some institutions now offer classes at local program sites which defrays commute time and costs for students majoring in early childhood.

Professional Development Through Coaching

Research conducted by the University of Nebraska Research Center for Children, Youth, and Families (CYFS) has shown the effectiveness of Early Childhood Coaching as an evidence-based model. Many programs now employ coaching as a best practice approach to improve the knowledge and skills of professionals thereby impacting positive outcomes for young children.

A Coach Collaborative Team works to develop: 1) standardized processes for coach training; 2) improved methods of communication among multiple coaches working in the same program; 3) identification of strategies for reducing coaching overload; and 4) alignment of coaching processes and practices. The Team's mission is to "encourage the optimal development of young children in Nebraska by supporting high-quality education and care." The Coach Development Team, a sub-group of the Coach Collaboration Team coordinates the development of initial and ongoing coach training and support.

Looking Forward: 2018-2020

Recommendation: Expand efforts of the Coach Collaborative Team to engage more programs and providers in the early childhood coach model

- Offer expanded access to coach training in collaboration with higher education and the Early Learning Connection Coordinators.
- Increase capacity for coaching by utilizing coach consultants within ESU and ELC efforts.
- Provide additional financial support for early childhood initiatives that use coaching, such as Step Up to Quality, as a tool to increase effective early childhood teaching.

III: Early Learning Standards

Well-defined standards guide early childhood professionals in their practice. Teachers and caregivers benefit from consistent benchmarks and indicators and offer a way to communicate with their peers. Measuring progress of children’s outcomes is more valid and reliable when assessed within a framework of complementary and aligned standards.

What’s Working Well?

Setting expectations for the professional knowledge of providers working with young children and their families

Nebraska’s Early Learning Guidelines have been revised and updated. The new document entitled *Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska’s Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards*, provide an easily accessible resource outlining what children birth to kindergarten should typically know and be able to do.

Early childhood teachers and caregivers may access training and materials through the Nebraska Department of Education Early Childhood Training Center. Professionals and institutions of higher education utilize these standards in preservice and inservice activities to build a common language and knowledge base across the various types of programs and services and to help prepare new teachers in the field.

Nebraska’s Early Learning and Development Standards align with:

- Child Care Licensing Regulations
- Step Up to Quality Standards
- Nebraska’s Core Competencies for early childhood professionals
- Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards

The updated standards now include early childhood mental health content and guidance to assist staff in early childhood education and care programs in preventing challenging behaviors in young children and to help determine a child’s need for a wider range of services. The Early Learning and Development Standards are also aligned with the Nebraska K-12 Content Standards. Together the documents outline what children from birth through high school should know and be able to do.

Looking Forward: 2018-2020

Recommendation: Support the use of the revised Early Learning Standards more widely in all early childhood programs and services.

- Offer *Early Learning Guidelines* training and resources to all home visitation program providers.
- Ensure all higher education early childhood degree faculty have access to updated materials for use in college curriculum coursework.



Nebraska's Early Learning Guidelines

Published in 2018, Nebraska's

revised *Early Learning Guidelines* were developed under the shared leadership of the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Head Start Association and the Nebraska Head Start—State Collaboration Office. The document is the product of the combined expertise of more than fifty experts from the public and private sector representing early childhood and higher education, family support networks, and state agencies and service systems, among others.

The document can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education website at cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ELG-PDF.pdf.



Early Learning Guidelines Training

Over 26,000 early childhood

professionals attended *Early Learning Guidelines* training sessions offered in 2016-2018. [Note: this number includes potential duplication due to various sessions for which professionals attended. Source: erecords.education.ne.gov].



Why NECPRS Matters to Government Efficiency

As of the 2019 Legislative Session, state lawmakers are considering proposals to leverage the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS) for greater efficiency in the child care licensing process.

Every year, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services verifies that licensed child care staff meet the training and professional education requirements for licensed status. This process requires DHHS personnel to conduct in-person visits to child care programs statewide to collect and record hardcopy documentation on the educators employed there.

As an online resource, NECPRS can be used to capture and record much of the same information currently being collected manually for child care licensing. This has the potential to greatly streamline a necessary, but burdensome and inefficient process for both state agency personnel as well as child care professionals.

IV: Early Childhood Data

Credible data resources are an integral part of a well-coordinated, viable early childhood infrastructure. Data assets are necessary to:

- Strengthen accountability for public dollars invested in services targeting our state's youngest children and their families.
- Increase efficiency by allowing program administrators to better track how families access and children benefit from early care and learning services.
- Better organize and develop state and local resources to address the most urgent needs of young children and their families.
- Ensure fidelity in program evaluation and guide strategies for implementing more effective service models.
- Help public schools follow children's developmental progress in their first five years and build upon early developmental gains as they transition into the K-12 environment.

What's Working Well?

Supporting continued development of Nebraska's Early Childhood Integrated Data System

The Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition has articulated a long-term goal focused on an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) in Nebraska. The Nebraska ECIDS will answer key questions about publicly funded early childhood services, provide greater accountability for public investments in services for young children, and inform future investments in early care and education.

It is known that Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) connect, integrate, secure, maintain, store, and report information from a variety of Early Childhood (EC) programs and services. States with fully functioning ECIDS are able to horizontally integrate data across agencies as well as vertically integrate data from EC programs to K-12 state longitudinal data systems. In doing so, states are able to provide distinct counts of children and/or families to more succinctly address important questions related to services received by children and families.

Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS)

The Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS) is a database that is part of a state early childhood integrated data system. NECPRS tracks enrollment and progress for enrolled programs in Nebraska Step Up to Quality.

NECPRS is also a registry for early childhood professionals in the state who choose to keep electronic records of their collective professional training as well as their educational and employment history. As of January 2019, 8,665 early childhood professionals have created accounts in NECPRS.

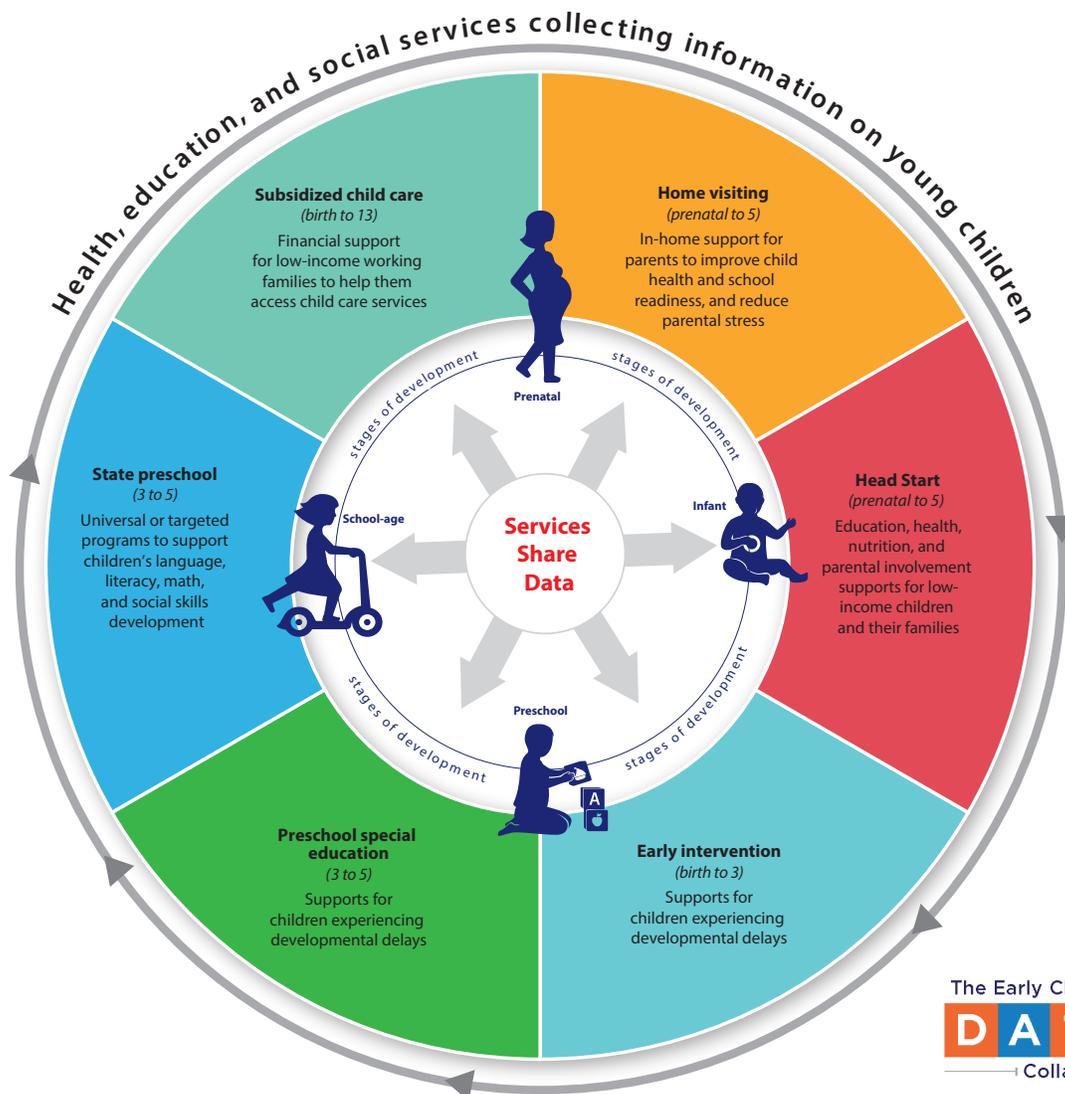
IDEA Data Toolkit

The federal IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, technical assistance center focused on early childhood data (DaSy) offers information regarding the “Building Stakeholder Knowledge About Data Toolkit.” The toolkit helps state agencies and stakeholder groups related to young children with disabilities and developmental delays in understanding their role in building state early childhood integrated data systems. [Source: dasycenter.org].

Looking Forward: 2018-2020

Recommendation: Support the integration of data from multiple early childhood data systems to create meaningful tools to better inform early childhood systems, services and policies in Nebraska.

- Support legislation to create a data governance body to oversee policies and procedures related to integrating and using early childhood data from multiple agencies currently storing early childhood data.
- Support the capacity building efforts of state agencies to use linked early childhood administrative data.
- Support a project-based strategy to build a fully functional and sustainable early childhood integrated data system in Nebraska.



V: Coordination and Collaboration

As previously stated, authentic collaboration in early care and education helps build systems at the state, regional, and local levels. Working together generally results in higher quality and more efficient child and family-centered programs and services leading to better outcomes for young children and families.

Collaborative efforts typically lead to more stable and sustainable programs and services over time. While working together often requires more time and energy initially, it ultimately provides more stability and satisfaction for families with young children.

What's Working Well?

Engaging and Collaborating with Nebraska's Families, and Public and Private Sector Stakeholders

Engaging Parents

Parents are children's first teachers and the most important partners in ensuring their health and development. High-quality programs provide daily communication and special opportunities to engage families in building knowledge and understanding of their child's developmental needs. Opportunities for families to network together may be formally included in a program, such as Head Start, Sixpence and public school programs.

Coordination Between State Agencies and Local Partners

State agencies know the value of coordination. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Department of Education work together to address quality improvement strategies in professional development and in advising the ongoing development of programs such as Nebraska Step Up to Quality.

The Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council is a vehicle for state agencies and other representative organizations and disciplines working together to keep up to date on the status of programs and services. Likewise, many local programs enter into formal interagency agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with other community agencies to enhance services, build shared leadership and accountability and to articulate timelines, identify necessary resources, and clarify program cost allocations.

Events and Conferences

Coordination in planning events and conferences such as the successful Nebraska 2018 Young Child Institute held in June help professionals from across disciplines to better understand the early childhood landscape and support the needs of young children and families living in Nebraska.

This type of collaborative event helps paint the early childhood landscape and informs stakeholders of policies or other critical strategies and developments in the realm of early education and care, involving law enforcement, educators, court and justice officials, health and disabilities professionals, parents and community leaders.

Looking Forward: 2018-2020

Recommendation: Enhance, align and sustain strategies for a mixed-delivery system in early care and education across Nebraska

- With ECICC leadership, engage local stakeholders to inform efficiencies in state and local partnership efforts.
- Continue to focus on developing public/private partnerships at state and local levels.
- Explore innovative strategies to assist families' access to affordable, high-quality early childhood programs.



The ECICC's Role in Coordination and Collaboration

Nebraska's Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council serves as a networking platform for early childhood stakeholders representing public and private sector interests. It creates a framework for aligning efforts and information related to public policy, state agency initiatives, funding, data resources, gaps and barriers in service systems and other functions.

State Legislature

- Senator Rick Kolowski (District 31)

State Agencies

- Sue Adams—DHHS, Mental Health
- Laura Arp—Department of Insurance
- Amy Bunnell—NDE, Early Intervention
- Julie Docter—DHHS, Medicaid
- Melody Hobson—NDE, Early Childhood/Preschool
- Cathy Mohnike—NDE, Homeless Education
- Nicole Vint—DHHS, Child Care
- Allison Wilson—DHHS, Child Abuse Prevention
- Vacant—NDE, Special Education/Preschool

Head Start Collaboration Office

- Joan Luebbers

Social Service Organizations

- Dawn Murphy (ECICC Chair)—Head Start-Tribal

Other Education Stakeholders

- Mary Phillips (ECICC Vice-Chair)—Educational Service Units
- Paula Thompson—Higher Education

Service Providers

- Mary Barry-Magsamen—EC Mental Health
- Susan Borchert—Social Services
- Gwendolyn Easter—Family Child Care
- Stephanie Knust—Head Start
- Suzanne Schneider—Center-Based Child Care
- Melissa Timmerman—Public Schools Early Childhood
- Vacant—Developmental Disabilities
- Vacant—Public Health

Parent Representatives

- Janelle Butler—Omaha
- Jamie Hazlett—Holdrege
- Krynn Larsen—Columbus
- Brenda McNiff—Beatrice
- Vacant
- Vacant

Other Stakeholders

- Allison Cunningham—Professional Development
- Carol Bowen—Business
- Karla Lester—Physician

Appendix I: Selected Program Highlights

Sixpence Early Learning Fund

Amy Bornemeier | abornemeier@nebraskachildren.org
singasonofsixpence.org

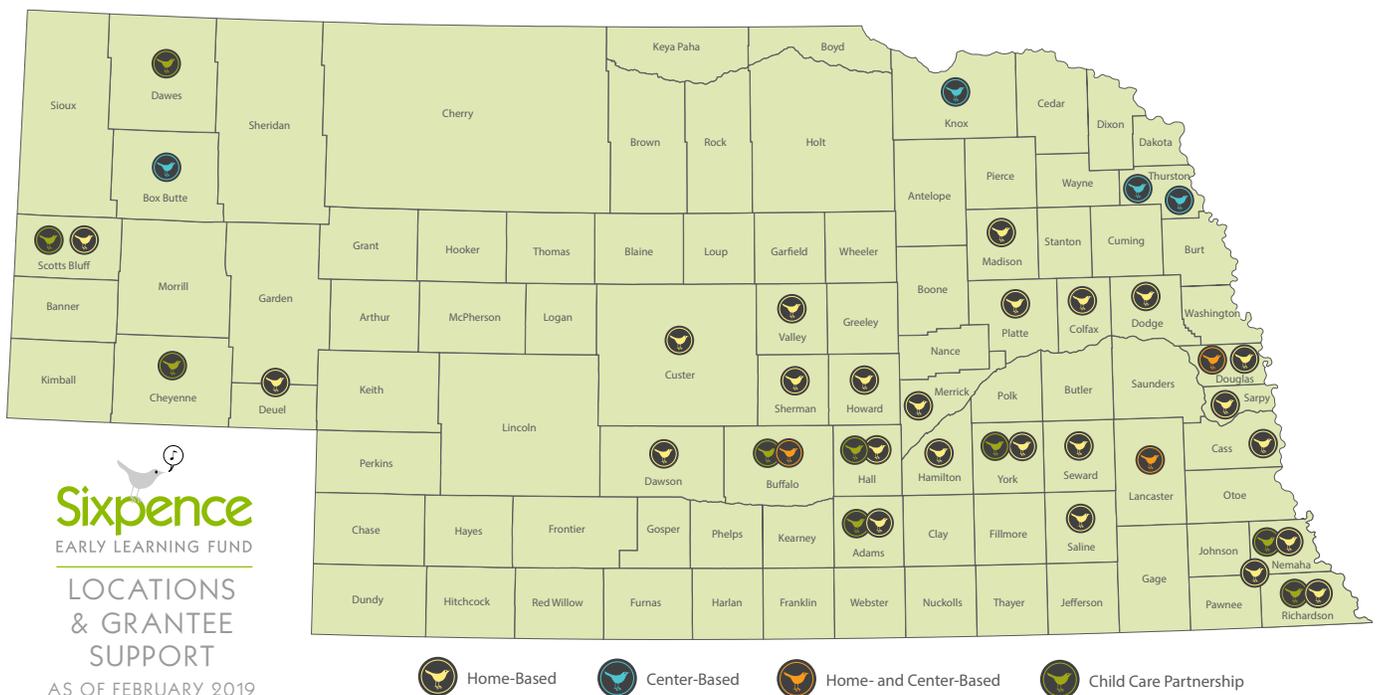
Sixpence is the product of the Nebraska Early Childhood Endowment Grant Fund, created by the Nebraska Legislature in 2006 to address the developmental needs of infants and toddlers at risk. It is an innovative, public-private partnership designed to promote locally controlled early childhood programs and services through funding, technical assistance and professional development supports.

Since its inception, the Sixpence model has focused on home-based services, center-based infant and toddler care, or a combination of the two. In 2015, LB547 made it possible for Sixpence to support partnerships between school districts and networks of local child care providers to enhance the quality of early childhood programs in the community. As of February 2018, there were 38 Sixpence grantees statewide.

Every year, Sixpence grantees participate in a rigorous, independent evaluation conducted by researchers at Munroe-Meyer Institute, UNMC. The full evaluation report can be found at singasonofsixpence.org/resources. Key insights from the most recent (2017-18) evaluation are outlined below.

Home-based and center-based services

- A total of 1,083 children and 948 families were served in rural (40%), mid-sized (29%) and urban communities.
- The majority of participating children (70%) received home-based, family engagement services.
- The majority (range of 89% to 95%) of participating children were meeting widely held expectations for physical, social-emotional, cognitive, linguistic, literacy and early math skills development.



Sixpence Child Care Partnerships

- 17 child care centers and 18 family child care home providers participated in Sixpence Child Care Partnerships.
- In the most recent evaluation year, Sixpence Child Care Partnerships served 714 children, 18% of whom received services through the Child Care Subsidy.
- 38% of the providers participating in the Partnerships achieved a Step 3 rating on the Step Up to Quality scale.

Communities for Kids

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Communities for Kids is a project of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. It was created in 2017 to address requests from communities for help in developing solutions to local child care challenges. These challenges largely center on the availability and affordability of child care programs, a major concern for parents who rely on these services to participate in the workforce and provide for their families. Because this issue has a direct bearing on job attraction and business recruitment, Communities for Kids also works to heighten awareness of early childhood infrastructure from the perspective of economic development.

Communities for Kids leverages Nebraska Children and Families Foundation's Collective Impact Model to engage stakeholders, inform strategic planning, encourage collaboration between peer communities and leverage available resources to deliver realistic, sustainable and locally driven solutions.

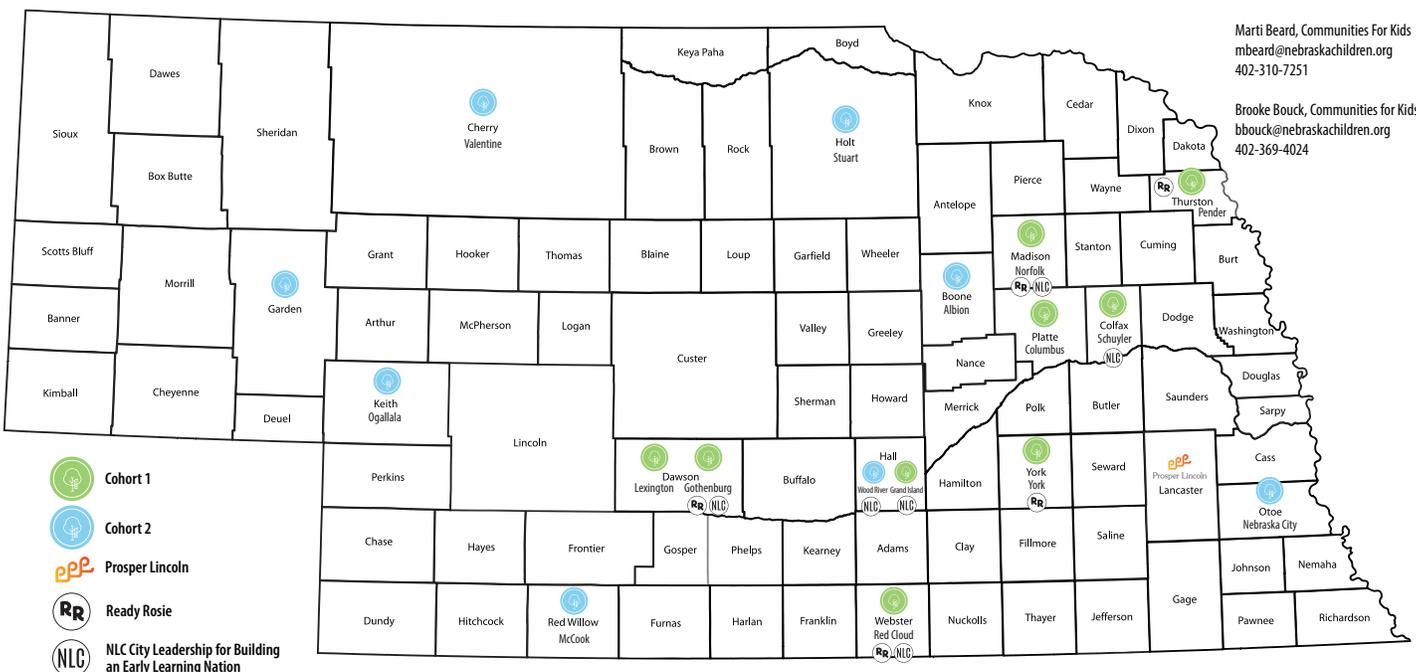
Communities for Kids actively works with 17 communities statewide.

Communities for Kids Growth Map (Current)

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Last Update: 01/08/2019

Rooted in Relationships

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Rooted in Relationships is a statewide initiative focused on enhancing children's social-emotional development from birth through age 8. The work of this initiative includes helping communities implement the Pyramid Model, an evidence-based framework to promote social, emotional and behavioral competence in young children. Rooted in Relationships also helps communities develop and implement plans to improve their early childhood systems of care. The initiative is currently active in eight Nebraska counties.

In 2017, Rooted in Relationships enabled 27 coaches to support 147 center- and home-based providers in 77 programs impacting over 1,200 children. Of these children,

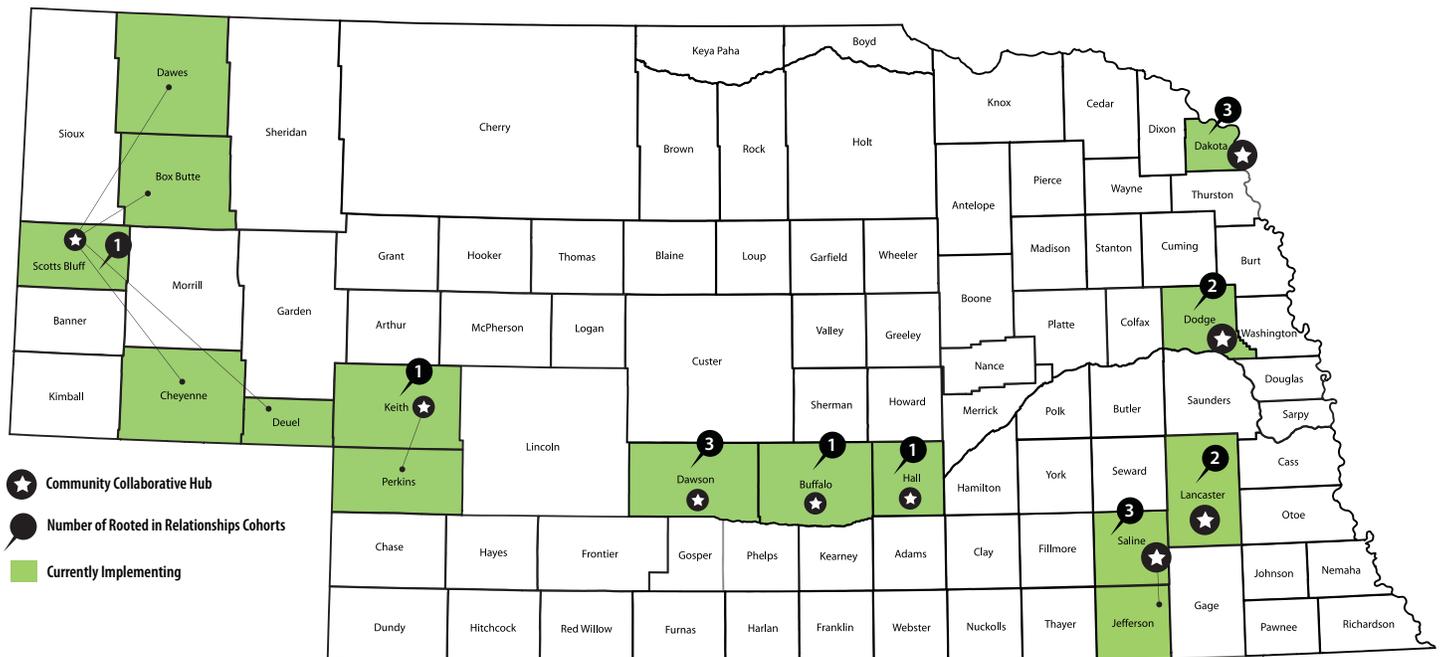
- 77% were in center-based programs and 23% were in home-based programs.
- 23% qualified for the Child Care Subsidy.
- 9% spoke a primary language other than English.

In June, 2018, Rooted in Relationships sponsored training facilitated by Dr. Rose Marie Allen, President and CEO of the Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence. The training was offered to Nebraska early childhood coaches and addressed the role implicit bias plays in Pre-K suspensions at the national, state and local level. The training covered culturally responsive leadership, implicit bias and color-blind ideology, micro-aggressions, cultural humility and culturally responsive practices.

The training was attended by 57 coaches from 12 coaching initiatives statewide, as well as 10 initiative leads who support early childhood coaching across the state. Response from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees indicating plans to integrate the content into their coaching practice.

Based on the positive response, plans are underway for a follow-up training focused on implicit bias, allowing an opportunity for participants to practice using the Pyramid Model Equity Coaching Guide.

Rooted in Relationships Growth Map (Current)



Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children

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The Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children offers technical assistance, training and resources to improve the well-being of maltreated young children most at risk for learning and developmental delays. The University of Nebraska Extension Educators are also involved in supporting quality improvements in many early childhood programs and collaborate with NDE and DHHS to deliver training to providers and parents.

The Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice (NCRP) is a component of the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children. Early childhood professionals consistently demonstrate high levels of vicarious trauma, stress and burnout, which in turn affects the quality of the critically important services they provide for children and families. The NCRP coordinates training, mentoring, consultation and evaluation to human services and early childhood professionals to mitigate the effects of these hazards. Its model focuses on promoting reflective practice to produce benefits at the organizational level, in management and in front-line employees.

Appendix II(a): Child Care Licensing*

Number and Capacity of Licensed Child Care/Preschool Programs

License Type	Number of Programs		License Capacity	
	June 2017	June 2018	June 2017	June 2018
Family Child Care Home I	1,461	1,429	14,403	14,089
Family Child Care Home II	566	640	7,539	7,518
Child Care Center	716	727	61,630	62,953
School-Age Only Center	273	285	33,061	34,505
Preschool	160	157	4,253	4,236
Total	3,176	3,238	120,886	123,301

Routine Inspections

License Type	Number of Inspections FY2017	Number of Inspections FY2018
Family Child Care Home I	1,966	1,632
Family Child Care Home II	845	720
Child Care Center	1,755	1,691
School-Age Only Center	644	672
Preschool	257	217
Total	5,467	4,932

Complaint Inspections

License Type	Number of Complaints FY2017	Number of Complaints FY2018
Family Child Care Home I	94	98
Family Child Care Home II	55	42
Child Care Center	376	419
School-Age Only Center	5	2
Preschool	1	4
Unlicensed Care Complaints	156	142
Total	687	707

*Data addresses Fiscal Year 2017: July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018: July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

APPENDICES

71-1917 Report

	FY2017	FY2018
Number of Applications Received	DNA	DNA
Number of Licenses Issued	550	581
Number of License Applications Denied	1	3
Number of Complaints Investigated	687	707
Number of Licenses Revoked	28	15
Number of Civil Penalties Levied	14	10
Dollar Amount of Civil Penalties Levied	\$3,751	\$6,808

Appendix II(b): Head Start



Head Start is a community-based, comprehensive early education program that gives young children from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and life.



2019 Nebraska Head Start Profile

Access to Head Start in Nebraska

3,547

Funded **Head Start** (HS) Slots



21% of eligible children ages 3 - 5 had access to HS

1,657

Funded **Early Head Start** (EHS) Slots



10% of eligible children under 3 had access to EHS

These slots filled **419 classrooms** in Nebraska.

By the Numbers

\$47,238,778

FY18 Estimated Funding for HS, EHS, and EHS-Child Care Partnerships in Nebraska

17 Head Start Programs

18 Early Head Start Programs

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



2.3x

Children in poverty are **2.3 times** more likely to suffer from 3 or more ACEs.

ACEs include abuse, neglect, homelessness, parental substance abuse, or foster care.

Research shows that as the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk of lifelong negative outcomes.

Head Start Story

"Head Start is not only good for kids, but it opens doors for parents to improve their lives, too. If I didn't have the Head Start program, I don't believe I would've been able to finish school and start college this semester. Head Start has made a huge impact in my son's life, and I wouldn't change my decision to put my kids in this program for anything."

Amanda Lankford
Parent

Nebraska's Head Start Workforce

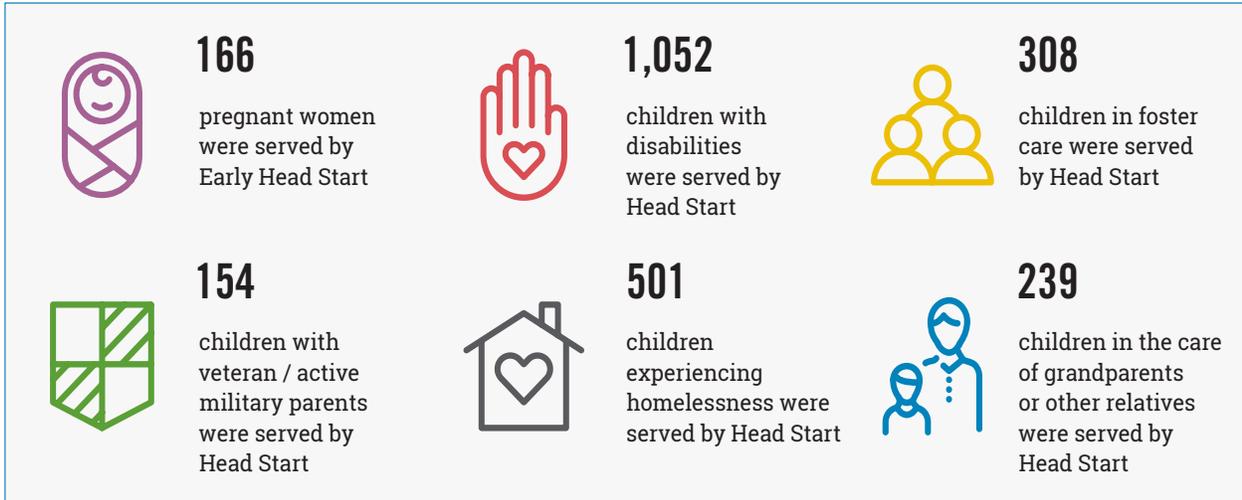


1,883

HS and EHS jobs in Nebraska

In Nebraska, the average Head Start teacher with a bachelor's degree makes **\$33,784** per year, compared to an average kindergarten teacher salary of **\$57,640**.

The Head Start Advantage in Nebraska



Demographics



Services

Head Start in the Community



For more information, please visit: go.nhsa.org/Facts



Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

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