

Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

February 10, 2023

Meeting was held via zoom and located at the Nebraska Department of Education, 500 S. 84th Street, Room G, Lincoln, NE

9:00a.m.

Council members present: Anthony, Bunnell, Freeny, Hobson, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Nunemaker, Robinson, Vint, Wilson

Council members excused: Borchert

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Mary Phillips; Council Secretary, Karen Hoffman; Technical Assistants Auman, Braddock, Brehm, Cimino, Cromer, Johnson, Lopez-Everett, Renn, Shockley and Texel; guest presenters: Wende Baker, Ben Baumfalk, Sami Bradley, Jared Stevens, and Toni Knust

This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:02 a.m. Public notification of the meeting was on the Nebraska Department of Education website and in the Omaha World Herald. The Public Meetings Notice was available online and onsite at the Department of Education, Conference room G. Presentation materials may be found in this [GoogleDocs](#) folder.

Council Meeting Convenes

ECICC Facilitator, Mary Phillips, convened the meeting, a quorum was confirmed, and a roll call attendance of voting members taken. Dr. Karla Lester introduced herself as the Council Chair and asked that meeting attendees introduce themselves and share a Super Bowl prediction. The agenda was confirmed, and the Public Meetings Act was announced and noted as available in the room.

***Approval of minutes – November 18, 2022**

Motion made by Marinovich and seconded by Vint to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2022, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 10-yes, 2-abstain, 0-no

Yes: Anthony, Bunnell, Hobson, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Vint, Wilson

Abstain: Nunemaker, Robinson

**** Public Comment, Announcements, Upcoming Events**

Dr. Lester asked for public comment or any announcements that would be of interest to the group; there were none. Nora shared about an upcoming Chadron State College hosted event, the “Excellence in Early Childhood Conference,” occurring on February 18th, with Professional Development Training available the day prior.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared updates about grant opportunities, both in process and about to be launched. They include the Workforce Stipend and Loan grant, the Business and Childcare Partnership grants, and round three of Stabilization grants. Beckie Cromer added that the final programs utilizing these dollars are about to launch. Amy Bunnell shared about attending a recent statewide meeting and roundtable discussion, with a resounding concern regarding the lack of available childcare for children with disabilities, and transportation struggles to attend childcare. The result is an increase in referrals for children with language delays, few social skills, and disruptive behaviors, all due to lack of social interaction as a Covid impact. The importance of partnering with local services to respond and provide support is great. Nicole shared there would be a roundtable meeting the following Thursday, with focus being taking childcare to the next level, and acknowledging gaps and barriers. The Council will continue these discussions. Dr. Lester stressed the importance of the Biennial Report as a vehicle to disseminate information to state Senators and others in decision-making roles. Nicole Vint can be reached at nicole.vint@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood Update

Melody Hobson, Administrator at the NDE Office of Early Childhood, shared a number of updates that included Programs and Partnerships. Submitted grants are being reviewed for either creating new or expanding existing programs. Step up to Quality (SUTQ) version 2.0 launched in February with some adjustments regarding required training hours and length of time to complete. A national search for a new NDE Commissioner is in process with applications being accepted through March 2 followed by interviews by Board of Education. A suggestion was made to invite the next Commissioner to a ECICC meeting to communicate the importance of Early Childhood needs in Nebraska. Nicole mentioned that she met with the new Governor's staff to provide a broad overview of Childcare and early education. Mitchell Clark, attending the meeting in Technical Assistant Elizabeth Lopez Everett's place, shared that First Five Nebraska had also met with the Governor's office and that interest was expressed in Early Childhood learning. Melody can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraska.gov.

Head Start Update

Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, Steph Knust, shared a powerpoint with updates about numbers being served and federal dollars available, adding that needs assessments are conducted to identify eligible populations and guide the appropriation of Head Start and Early Head Start program dollars. Steph commented there is a high cost per child due to the comprehensive nature of the services provided. Amy Bunnell shared recent concerns shared by districts in Educational Services Units (ESUs) serving tribal reservations and concerns that Covid has greatly impacted this population. A goal is to more strategically partner with tribal Head Start. In Part C Federal regulations, children living on reservations are a targeted population for ChildFind. Amy affirmed there is room for some local level, combined initiatives, and more targeted collaboration. Steph shared there are state level opportunities for program expansions that can be applied for and the importance of potential applicants keeping an eye out for them. Steph can be reached at steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Update

ECICC Technical Assistant, Stephanie Renn, shared that Shannon Mitchell-Boekstal, who has served as PDG Program Manager, is transitioning into a SixPence role at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. She introduced Wende Baker who, with Shannon's assistance, will be transitioning into the role of PDG Project Manager over the next few months. Wende shared a powerpoint that included the four overarching goals of Nebraska's Preschool Development Grant, and a recap of the grant history from 2019 into 2023. While there is no guarantee, it is hoped there will be additional implementation funding for another three years. Emphasis is being placed on including the family voice in advisory roles and using data to demonstrate progress when possible. Strategic planning is ongoing as is developing measurable progress points and working with key stakeholders. Wende encouraged the group to bring forward any questions or desired subjects they would like to hear about at future Council meetings. Wende can be reached at bpscontracting2000@gmail.com, or 402-416-5497.

Part C Update

Early Development Network Part C Co-leads, Amy Bunnell and Jessica Anthony, presented a powerpoint about the FFY 2021 Annual Performance Report (APR), of which data had been shared at the November ECICC meeting. The Report is federally required by OSEP, the Office of Special Education Programs, and the latest will cover the time period of 7/31/21 to 6/30/22. OSEP will eventually provide feedback that will be posted. The Part C Application, also required by OSEP, was discussed next. Within the application, Nebraska assures how awarded funds will be spent, and the ECICC has a role to review, advise, and assist the lead agency in the performance of its responsibilities. In Nebraska the lead agency is a Co-Lead partnership between NDE and NDHHS, which is unique. Once approved, Nebraska typically receives \$3 million on July 1st of each year. Amy shared a list of the application requirements and how the funds are utilized, saying the application will be share with the Council once it is complete. Amy and Jessica can be reached at the following: amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov and Jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) Update

Ben Baumfaulk, NDE ECIDS Project Lead, introduced ECIDS staff, Jarod Stevens, and Toni Knust, who collectively provided an update and recent developments about the Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems. Incidentally, ECIDS is pronounced “e-Kids” in Nebraska. The ECIDS system is charged with addressing the complicated structure of the state’s Early Childhood system and providing data points to assist programs in better targeting the needs of Nebraska families. Some milestones from past year’s work were shared as were details about the system architecture that is currently in development. A draft project timeline was shared which was said to be somewhat aggressive but may have ECIDS 1.0 ready by Spring of 2023 if agreements and other requirements are in place. They are very excited to be at this juncture after 15 years. Contact information was shared onscreen and Ben said they would be happy to provide a presentation to other groups as requested.

Circle of Security (COS) Update

Sami Bradley, Associate VP Early Childhood Mental Health, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and works with the Rooted in Relationships Program alongside ECICC TA, Lynne Brehm. Sami shared some program background, saying that COS Parenting is an eight-week, evidence-based program that was designed for parents and caregivers to help build relationships and attachment. Since 2020 a classroom model has been created, as well. COS has been in Nebraska for ten years and a map showed where registered trained facilitators are located. One highlight Sami was excited to share was teacher input following COS training that revealed lower levels of stress in their classrooms. Another note from 2021-22 data collected showed that COS has positively impacted almost 8000 children. Sami closed by thanking all the partners that work together to make COS happen in Nebraska. Sami can be reached at sbradley@nebraskachildren.org.

Governor’s Biennial Report Update

Mary Phillips shared that the dissemination plan for the 2018-2021 Governor’s Biennial Report is still in process, and she is encouraged to know that several meeting attendees have had an audience with the new Governor’s office. Mary reminded the group the most recent Report, which is usually a biennial one, contains an extra year due to Covid. Given that, the next plan will be 2021-2023, and due at the end of 2023 for sharing out in 2024. Ongoing discussion will occur at the May meeting both about disseminating the current report, as well as a start on the next one. Mary said coming communication with the Governor’s office will include the situation the ECICC is in with having so many vacancies. Karen will include the Dissemination Plan along with the meeting Minutes. Mary requested that council members and technical assistants note when and where they have had an opportunity to share the report prior to the May meeting.

May Meeting – Length and Components

It was noted that the next ECICC meeting on May 5, 2023, will be in-person, with the location to come. Members are welcome to email Karen agenda suggestions for the Steering Committee’s consideration.

Adjournment

Mary thanked the group for all the great information shared, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45a.m.