

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

**May 3, 2024**

**9:00a.m. CT**

The meeting was held in-person at the SCC Jack Huck Continuing Education Center, 301 S. 68<sup>th</sup> St. Place, Lincoln, NE

**Council members present:** Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Knust, Marinovich, Robinson, Vint, and Wilson

**Council members excused:** Hobson, Jara, Nunemaker

**Also in attendance:** Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants Auman, Cimino, Johnson, Renn, and Shockley; guest presenter, Elizabeth Lopez-Everett from First Five Nebraska.

*This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:00 a.m. Public notification of the meeting was on the Nebraska Department of Education website and in the Omaha World Herald. The Public Meetings Act was available online and onsite in the meeting room. Presentation materials may be found in this [Google Docs](#) folder.*

### **Council Meeting Convenes**

ECICC Facilitator, Mary Phillips, called the group together, confirmed a quorum was present and that the meeting was advertised in the Omaha World Herald as a public notice, and, finally, that the Public Meetings Act was available in the room. Vice-Chairperson, Nora Robinson, led the group in introductions.

### **\*Approval of minutes – February 9, 2024**

Motion made and seconded by Knust and Marinovich to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2024, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 9-yes, 0-abstain

Yes: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Knust, Marinovich, Robinson, Vint, Wilson; Abstain: 0

### **\*\* Public Comment, Announcements, Upcoming Events**

Public comments or announcements were requested. Technical Assistant, Jennifer Auman, shared that N-MIECHV (Nebraska – Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting) Program has expanded a great deal in the last 18 months, and that she would be glad to share more information with members should they request it. Mary Phillips noted that Technical Assistant, Lynne Brehm, would be retiring in June, and that Sami Bradley, Associate Vice President of Early Childhood Mental Health working with Rooted in Relationships at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, will step in to take her place. Lynne was unable to attend, and Mary shared public recognition and gratitude for her commitment and decades of work in the Early Childhood world, supporting children and families in Nebraska. Mary also noted the upcoming Nebraska Young Child Institute occurring in Kearney June 25-26<sup>th</sup>. Nora shared about the High Plains/Panhandle Early Childhood Conference entitled, “A Joyous Way to Learn” featuring early childhood author and musician, Jim Gill, on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> in Sidney. Council member, Gwen Easter, shared that her organization and daycare, Safe Haven Community Center, celebrates 25 years this year. Congratulations and applause were shared.

### **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update**

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared a couple of announcements. They are currently working on the State Plan which is due every three years and is, essentially, the application for CCF Funds. Will be open for public comment in mid-May with a public hearing following. Future dates with the Council, and the Plan will be available online and in hard copy form as requested. Nicole also shared about the March 1<sup>st</sup> reauthorization of their new, final Rule, adding that a two-year waiver has been requested due to some of the new regulations Nebraska was working with making the 60-day implementation deadline difficult. Two important changes include switching from attendance to enrollment, and prepaying childcare services at the beginning of the month for the upcoming month. There will be more to come, and the Council will be tapped for ideas.

Nicole can be reached at [nicole.vint@nebraska.gov](mailto:nicole.vint@nebraska.gov).

### **Early Childhood (EC) Update**

Steph Knust, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, shared updates from the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) on behalf of Director, Melody Hobson. Information included preschool new and expansion grants are being considered by the State Board of Education, and the OEC making recommendations related to the recently passed LB 71 regarding district early childhood programs and the ages they serve. Implications for Rule 11 are being reviewed, and the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS) website and functionality is the subject of a Request for Proposal (RFP) currently in process with the goal of improvements being made to ensure its usefulness for the next decade. Melody can be reached at [melody.hobson@nebraska.gov](mailto:melody.hobson@nebraska.gov).

At this point Sami Bradley, noted earlier with news about Lynne Brehm retiring, joined the meeting via zoom. Sami shared about her experience as a licensed mental health practitioner focused on young children and families, and her excitement about joining this group as a Technical Assistant.

### **Head Start (HS) Update**

Steph Knust continued by sharing a PowerPoint with Head Start information including some program and policy updates, and a newly released infant/toddler homelessness report. Program information and enrollment numbers were shared, and a note about a National Head Start Association Fact Sheet being available at [nhsa.org](http://nhsa.org) for October 2023. Steph Knust can be reached at [steph.knust@nebraska.gov](mailto:steph.knust@nebraska.gov).

### **Part C Update**

NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Early Development Network Part C Co-lead, Amy Bunnell, shared some updates, including the Part C Federal Application, which had been emailed to the council, being available for public review through May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Once approved, funds should be released on July 1 to assist with implement of early intervention programs. Amy also shared the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will conduct a monitoring visit to Nebraska in October to examine both the early intervention and special education systems, with a focus on ensuring children with disabilities are receiving equitable services. OSEP will conduct virtual interviews that will likely include some ECICC members. Following the onsite visit, a report will be issued and more information will be shared at the November ECICC meeting. Amy can be reached at [amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov](mailto:amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov).

### **First Five Nebraska (FFN) Update**

Elizabeth Lopez-Everett, Deputy Director of First Five Nebraska, shared a powerpoint and update about several child and childcare-related bills focused on improvements to early childhood issues, noting specifically which bills passed. Some Senators who have been advocates for early childhood issues have been term limited, therefore, upcoming elections will be very important to replace some of those voices. Elizabeth share there may be one or two special sessions related to property tax relief and the issue of state electoral voting if requirements are met for them to occur. Elizabeth can be reached at [everett@firstfivenebraska.org](mailto:everett@firstfivenebraska.org).

### **Governor's Biennial Report Update**

ECICC Facilitator, Mary Phillips shared the current version of the Governor's Biennial Report and a powerpoint with a schedule that culminates in sharing a final version with the Governor's office. This Report will be titled "Common Ground – More Now Than Ever, 2022-2024." Mary thanked those who made updates. Finishing work will occur and hard copies available for review at the August 16<sup>th</sup> ECICC meeting. When the next Legislative session begins in January, 2025, Senators will be provided a completed copy. Mary can be reached at [dmphil2936@gmail.com](mailto:dmphil2936@gmail.com).

### **August 16, 2024, meeting format and elements**

The next meeting will be in-person on Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, at the SCC Jack Huck Continuing Education Center, with meeting length communicated in the future. The Council was encouraged to email agenda suggestions to Karen for the Steering Committee's consideration. A formal call for agenda items will go out in early July.

### **Other/Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 10:25 a.m. with an approved motion to adjourn led by Vice-Chair, Nora Robinson.