

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

August 16, 2024

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

Council members present: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Marinovich, Nunemaker, Ray, Robinson, Vint, Wilson

Council members excused: Jara, Knust

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants Auman, Braddock, Cimino, Clark, Johnson, Jones, Shockley

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 meeting to order and led introductions. The Public Meetings Act was noted as being available in the meeting room.

***Approval of minutes – May 3, 2024**

Motion made and seconded by Marinovich and Borchert, respectively, to approve the minutes from the May 3rd, 2024, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 7-yes, 2-abstain

Yes: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Marinovich, Robinson, Vint, Wilson

Abstain: Hobson, Ray

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

Amy Bunnell shared an announcement that the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), prior to its visit to Nebraska in October, would like to meet virtually with voting members of the ECICC during two given options: Tuesday, 9/10 at 12p.m. or Wed. 9/11 at 2p.m., both CST. Interested members were asked to reach out to Amy if interested. Questions will focus on Nebraska's system of early intervention.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared updates about recent activities. This included the Preschool Development Grant and possible funding over the next three years, if awarded. Work is continuing on the final Rule which was passed in March. Nicole made note that finger printing machines are in the third round of system testing and the intention is to eventually distribute them throughout the state. This will potentially expedite the process of approving childcare staff. Nicole can be reached at nicole.vint@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood (EC) Update

Melody Hobson, NDE Office of Early Childhood Administrator, shared updates about LB71 which involves changes to the definition of an Early Childhood Education program that is offered by a school district or educational service unit. Proposed new language discusses compulsory attendance age being six years prior to January 1st of the, then, current school year. These updates provide clearer guidance to school districts and families. Next, Melody shared plans about coming updates to Rule 11 (regulations for the approval of prekindergarten programs established by school boards or education service units and for the issuance of early childhood education grants), for school districts serving children birth to compulsory attendance age. This includes the waiver process, flexibilities around teacher qualifications, and the timeline. There will be a presentation to the Board in September with a proposed plan moving forward; the Council may be asked for input at the November meeting. Melody can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraskagov

Head Start (HS) Update

Melody stepped in for Steph Knust, State Head Start Director, sharing an Office of Head Start (OHS) update that included the national priorities for program grant recipients. Head Start Eligibility Criteria was also shared, as was data for Nebraska program enrollment, and policy updates. It was noted that approval of the final rule is still in process. Budget updates for FY24 and 25 were shared with hopeful, substantial increases in FY25. A slide shared some helpful links to a wide array of resources. Steph can be reached at steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Part C Update

NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Early Development Network Part C Co-lead, Amy Bunnell, reminded the group about the process for creating the IDEA Part C Annual Performance Report (APR), and shared how the federal determination is calculated. Nebraska's ratings for compliance and early childhood outcomes were noted and thoughts shared about why Nebraska was given a "Needs Assistance" score. The landscape and realities for childcare in Nebraska were discussed, noting that efforts need to be made earlier in a child's life to ensure success in meeting developmental milestones. Amy also shared a recap about the IDEA Part C Application, and that Nebraska received full approval and funding for the July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025, grant year. Amy can be reached at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (N-MIECHV) Program Update

Jenni Auman, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Manager, and ECICC Technical Assistant, shared highlights and news about some additional funding sources and some expanded programs. Among other efforts, new funding will bring nurses into Douglas County homes through the Family Connects Universal Home Visiting Program. There is great excitement as collaboration is happening to bring home visiting to more Nebraska families. Jenni can be reached at jennifer.auman@nebraska.gov.

Governor's Biennial Report Update

Facilitator, Mary Phillips, handed out copies of the draft Report and had tables review a section each of the report. Notes were compiled and collected, and the goal will be to have a more final version, as well as a one-page Summary sheet, to share with the Council at the November meeting.

Other/Adjourn

The next ECICC meeting will be by Friday, November 15, 2024, and will more than likely be held virtually. More information to come. The meeting concluded with an approved motion to adjourn at 11:23a.m.