

## **Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) - November 15, 2024**

The meeting was held via zoom, with an in-person location at the Nebraska Department of Education, 500 S. 84<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Council members present virtually: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Knust, Marinovich, Ray, Robinson, Vint. Council members excused: Carmoney, Jara, Nunemaker, Wilson

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants: Braddock, Bradley, Cimino, Clark, Jones, Shockley; Presenter, Lindsey Ondrak

*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 Vice-Chair and acting Chairperson, Nora Robinson, called the meeting to order and led introductions. The Public Meetings Act was noted as being available in the onsite meeting room.

### **\*Approval of minutes – August 16, 2024**

Motion made and seconded by Marinovich and Bunnell, respectively, to approve the minutes from the August 16, 2024, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 9-yes, 1-abstain

Yes: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Marinovich, Ray, Robinson, Vint

Abstain: Knust

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

Nora Robinson shared about the upcoming Excellence in Early Childhood conference in Chadron in February with day one including a Keynote speaker and breakouts, and day two focusing on professional development.

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

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared updates about recent activities, a large amount of work involving reauthorization of CCDF Block Grant regulations. Prospective pay as well as paying for enrollment vs attendance are being addressed. Nicole also shared that, with recent Legislative approval, efforts are commencing around the development of intergenerational childcares, with \$300,000 being available for applicants to apply for. Nicole can be reached at [nicole.vint@nebraska.gov](mailto:nicole.vint@nebraska.gov).

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

Melody Hobson, Administrator for the NDE Office of Early Childhood, shared updates about some recent hiring activities for positions being housed out of the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) in La Vista. She mentioned efforts for appropriate level reading practices that will include data collection, family literacy, and preschool programs, and involving multiple teams at the NDE. Nebraska has also received a Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant for \$55 million over the next five years. Step Up to Quality Director, Lauri Cimino, also shared some program updates, after which Melody wrapped up by sharing about the School Readiness tax credit having been reauthorized in 2024 without a sunset. Melody can be reached at [melody.hobson@nebraskagov](mailto:melody.hobson@nebraskagov) and Lauri can be reached at [lauri.cimino@nebraska.gov](mailto:lauri.cimino@nebraska.gov).

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

Steph Knust, State Head Start Director, shared a powerpoint with several updates about both National and Nebraska Head Start efforts. Head Start Eligibility Criteria, calculators that assist with determining eligibility, and enrollment and budget information was all noted. A local update included Educare Lincoln being awarded some competitive expansion funding as a center-based option, with 80-90 new slots now being available. Office of Head Start goals were also shared with a focus of improving program environments, with standards that will require a significant investment from Congress. Finally, a resource page with links was shared with the group. With so many updates, the group was encouraged to reach out with any questions.

Steph 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, and Jessica Anthony, DHHS Program Coordinator for the Early Development Network, shared updates about Nebraska's birth-to-three efforts. Jessica shared about annual Family Survey logistics, what the survey measures, and that Nebraska traditionally has a very high response rate. Amy shared about the Part C Annual Performance Report (APR), including that the newest set of data will be reported in February to the Federal Office. The group heard about each APR Indicator Topic and the targets and performance percentages from both the current and previous year's report. The ECICC Chairperson signs off on the APR, so a motion was made by Amy Bunnell and seconded by Melody Hobson for this to happen. A roll-call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: 10-yes

Yes: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Knust, Marinovich, Ray, Robinson, Vint

Amy thanked the Council members who, in October, met with visitors from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for monitoring of the Nebraska Office of Special Education. Connie Shockley also provided assistance and was thanked. The four-day visit was said to have gone well, and Nebraska will receive a final report with concerns and/or recommendations in the next 60-90 days; information will be shared out once it is received. Amy can be reached at [amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov](mailto:amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov), and Jessica can be reached at [jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov](mailto:jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov).

### **Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children presentation**

Lindsey Ondrak, Outreach & Training Specialist with the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL), shared a presentation about the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children. Housed under the CCFL at UNL, their mission is to provide support, training, and resources to improve the well-being of maltreated young children, aged birth to five, in Nebraska. Three facets of their program include Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Reflection Practice, and Court Infusion. Information about all of these, as well as some 2025 virtual training opportunities, can be found at [www.Nebraskababies.com](http://www.Nebraskababies.com). Lindsey encouraged the group to reach out with ideas or feedback, and can be reached at [lindsey.ondrak@unl.edu](mailto:lindsey.ondrak@unl.edu).

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

ECICC Facilitator Mary Phillips noted the Report and a one-page Summary are nearing final stages. Links to both documents were shared in the chat and attendees were encouraged to share comments. To finalize the process, a GoogleForm will eventually be sent out to gather final input and comments before placing them on the ECICC website. At the February meeting hard copies of the Report and Summary will be distributed. The Steering Committee will identify key areas to send the electronic version to, and will hope to eventually present hard copies in-person to the Governor, as has occurred in the past. Mary can be reached at [dmpphil2936@gmail.com](mailto:dmpphil2936@gmail.com).

**February meeting components** will include the Biennial Report and Summary being finalized. In January Karen will email the Council to request additional agenda items for the Steering Committee's consideration.

The next ECICC meeting will be held virtually on Friday, February 14, 2025. More information to come. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 11:15a.m.