

Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) - February 14, 2025

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

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

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants: Auman, Bradley, 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 [GoogleDocs](#) folder.

Council Meeting Convenes

Nora Robinson, and acting Chairperson, called the meeting to order and led introductions that included attendees sharing a memory connected to Valentine's Day. The Public Meetings Act was noted as being available in the onsite meeting room.

***Approval of minutes – November 15, 2024**

Motion made and seconded respectively by Bunnell and Knust to approve the minutes from the November 15, 2024, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: -yes, 1-abstain

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

Abstain: Nunemaker

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

Nora shared two upcoming events: Early Childhood (EC) mid-winter conference for 21 school districts at ESU 13, and a two-day EC fair at Chadron State College. Mary shared about an upcoming hybrid parenting networking meeting for providers in the region with Lincoln Littles, The Arc of Lincoln, and PTI Nebraska. Michelle Nunemaker shared this is her last ECICC meeting as she is to begin a new position with Lutheran Family Services in March. Michelle pledged to remain connected to this group; she was wished well in her new position.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared updates about recent activities. Their regulations are open and substantial changes are being made regarding enrollment and the issuing of grants and contracts. There has been one applicant to utilize funding to create an intergenerational child care program inside an assisted living/nursing home. More funds are available, and the RFP is still active.

Nicole can be reached at nicole.vint@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood (EC) Update

Melody Hobson, Administrator for the NDE Office of Early Childhood, shared a powerpoint with information about Rule 11 Review – Regulations for Prekindergarten Programs and, specifically, three policy issues and respective proposals to address them and respond to survey feedback. An update about Step Up to Quality was also shared, noting there are currently 1006 participants.

Melody can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraskagov

Head Start (HS) Update

Steph Knust, State Head Start Director, shared a powerpoint with several updates about both National and Nebraska Head Start efforts. Recent news about possible funding freezes has caused concern, however, Steph was not aware of any service disruption in Nebraska. While there were not many policy updates, some may come with new leadership in DHHS. Resources are also being updated and Steph shared a resource page with a number of updated links. Head Start will be celebrating its 60th birthday in May and several things are being planned around the state.

Steph can be reached at steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

***Part C Update**

NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Early Development Network (EDN) Part C Co-lead, Amy Bunnell, and Jessica Anthony, DHHS Program Coordinator for the Early Development Network, shared updates regarding Part C funding and programs. The Annual Performance Report (APR) that contains annual Part C data was submitted for the February 1st deadline. Once the federal office reviews the report it will be posted, and a link sent out to the Council. Part C grant funding information from the federal office is expected soon, after which the annual application will be completed and submitted for 7/1/25-6/30/26. There will be more updates at the May meeting.

Amy can be reached at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov, and Jessica can be reached at jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov.

Legislative Update

First Five Nebraska Policy Advisory and ECICC Technical Assistant, Mitch Clark, shared a ppt with updates about Legislative bills that are relevant to this group. Important dates were also shared that will indicate which bills may move forward. Of specific interest to the ECICC, LB346 provides for changes to membership numbers of boards, commissions, councils, etc. A government committee hearing was held the day prior, February 13th. This bill may reduce the number of members of this Council to 16. Mitch provided a link to a Legislative Watch List:

<https://www.firstfivenebraska.org/legislativewatchlist/>. Mitch can be reached at mclark@firstfivenebraska.org, or 402-261-9671, ext. 106.

Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health (NAIMH) Update

Sami Bradley, Vice President, Early Childhood Mental Health (MH) Infant MH Mentor with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, shared a ppt and update about these efforts. NAIMH exists to promote the mental well-being and health of infants and young children across Nebraska. An infant and early childhood MH statewide plan is being developed to build capacity, develop diversified and sustainable funding for IECMH, and to promote awareness and advocacy. Two April training days were noted that will bring together some experts in the IMH field. Sami can be reached at sbradley@nebraskachildren.org.

Governor's Biennial Report Update

ECICC Facilitator Mary Phillips shared an update about the Biennial Report to the Governor and the Summary, including where the two items are located on the ECICC website. A link for Talking Points and a Dissemination Plan were also shared in the chat, and the group was encouraged to begin sharing out the Report and tracking their activity. Karen will follow up by emailing pdfs of all four documents. Mary will plan to reach out to the Governor's office to request a meeting for the purpose of more formally presenting the Report, as has occurred in the past. Mary can be reached at dmphil2936@gmail.com.

May meeting components

In March Karen will email the Council to request agenda items for the Steering Committee's consideration.

The next ECICC meeting will be held in person at the SCC Jack Huck Continuing Education Center on Friday, May 2, 2025. More information to come. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 10:57 a.m.