

Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) – November 7, 2025

The meeting was held in person in the State Board Room at the Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Council members present: Anthony, Bittner, Bunnell, Carmoney, Flood, Gemar, Hobson, Jara, Kilgore, Knust, Kresser, Lada, Layman, Marinovich, Packard, Peterson, Ray, Rayburn, Rotert, Schmidt, Schroder, Vanderford, Vint.
Council members excused: Gomes

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

This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:00a.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

ECICC Chairperson, Amber Jara, called the meeting to order at 9:00a.m. and led introductions that included 13 newly appointed members who were attending their first ECICC meeting. Attendees were asked to share about a caregiver or educator who was meaningful to them. The Public Meetings Act was noted as being available in the meeting room.

Approval of minutes – August 15, 2025

Motion made and seconded respectively by Marinovich and Vint to approve the minutes from the August 15, 2025, ECICC meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: Yes – 9; Abstain - 14

Yes: Anthony, Bunnell, Carmoney, Hobson, Jara, Knust, Marinovich, Ray, Vint

Abstain: Bittner, Flood, Gemar, Kilgore, Kresser, Lada, Layman, Packard, Peterson, Rayburn, Rotert, Schmidt, Schroder, Vanderford

There were no public comments, announcements, or upcoming events shared.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with the Office of Economic Assistance at DHHS, shared a “CCDF 101” powerpoint presentation that included eligibility requirements, Federal poverty levels, license requirements and steps for subsidy providers. CCDF fund disbursements were shared, as well as what types of grants are provided. 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 number of updates and information for the benefit of new appointees. These included information about the current Literacy Project and its goals, the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant, and Rule 11 changes with next steps including their approval. Melody also shared details about the Step Up to Quality program that rates Nebraska preschools, and three projects that are happening at the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC). Finally, Child Development Associate (CDA) Roundtable initiatives were shared. Melody can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraska.gov.

Head Start (HS) Update

Steph Knust, State Head Start Director, shared a powerpoint explaining the program for the benefit of new members, and several updates. Head Start is a federally funded program that provides free, comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families to promote school readiness. Nebraska has 19 grant recipients that administer Head Start programs in the state. A

link was provided with information for the Nebraska Head Start Programs which is listed on the NDE website. Steph shared that the current Nebraska Head Start Collaboration Office grant for Fiscal Year (FY) 26 was submitted on September 30th of this year. A resource page showed a number of links to many points of information. Steph can be reached at steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Part C Update

The Nebraska Departments of Education and Health and Human Services team together for early intervention efforts throughout the state, known as “Co-Leads” agencies, and are represented respectively by Amy Bunnell and Jessica Anthony. They shared a powerpoint that included an overview of the Early Development Network (EDN) structure and its regulations. Jessica shared about who is assisted, what services are provided and to whom. Twenty-seven Planning Region Teams (PRTs) in Nebraska assist in the planning and implementation of the Early Intervention Act. Information about the IDEA Part C Annual Performance Report (APR) and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) were shared, as were details about the annual Part C Family Survey which has routinely had one of the highest return rates in the country. Amy shared 2024-2025 data that affirmed efforts are proving successful in finding and serving Nebraska’s children who need early intervention. Data was shared and how it measured up to targets set either by the Federal office or by Nebraska Co-Leads.

Each year the ECICC Chairperson signs off on the Annual Report Certification of the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) under Part C of the IDEA Act submission. Therefore, a motion was made by Marinovich and seconded by Packard to approve Amber Jara doing this. The motion passed unanimously. When the data is eventually uploaded and posted onto the ECICC website, the Council will be notified. Finally, some website resources were shown including the Babies Can’t Wait Booklet, Family Guide, and the It’s Never Too Early information card. Resources can be found at this link: <https://edn.ne.gov/cms/edn-brochures-and-materials>. Jessica can be reached at jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov, and Amy can be reached at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov.

Legislative Update

First Five Nebraska (FFN) Policy advisor and ECICC Technical Assistant, Mitch Clark, shared information about upcoming Legislative work that will affect early childhood efforts in Nebraska. The first year of Child Care Tax Credits and School Readiness Tax Credits were a success with a combined \$36M being requested of \$25M available. FFN’s priority during the 2026 legislative session will be mobilizing around [LB304](#) to maintain 185% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) eligibility for the child care subsidy. This will include a \$14M per year fiscal note in the outyears (one or more years after the current budget year) during a \$451M budget deficit. FFN is pursuing other legislation involving intergenerational care facilities, tax credit data, home visiting, and Prenatal Plus. Mitch can be reached at mclark@firstfivenebraska.org.

February 13, 2026, meeting & components

Amy Bunnell shared that the February meeting is typically held virtually, so details will eventually be shared with the group. Attendees were encouraged to share agenda suggestions with Karen at any time, but specifically when an emailed “call for agenda items” is sent out in January. The Steering Committee will meet to assemble the agenda.

The meeting adjourned with consensus at 11:32a.m.