

## **Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) – August 15, 2025**

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

Council members present: Anthony, Borchner, Bunnell, Hobson, Jara, Knust, Marinovich, Packard, Ray, Vint. Council members excused: Carmoney

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants: Auman, Braddock, Cimino, Clark, Johnson, Jones, Shockley; presenters, Alex Daro (in-person) and Ilissa Talkington (virtually)

*This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:05 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**

ECICC Chairperson, Amber Jara, called the meeting to order at 9:05a.m. and led introductions. The Public Meetings Act was noted as being available in the back of the meeting room.

### **Election of Vice-Chairperson**

To meet Council By-Laws requirements, a vote was needed to replace former Vice-Chairperson, Nora Robinson, who retired in July. Sue Borchner was nominated and a motion was made and seconded by Hobson and Marinovich respectively to elect her. A voice vote was held and the motion passed.

### **Approval of minutes – May 2, 2025**

Motion made and seconded respectively by Marinovich and Vint to approve the minutes from the May 2nd, 2025, ECICC meeting; roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 6-yes, 3-abstain

Yes: Bunnell, Hobson, Knust, Marinovich, Ray, Vint

Abstain: Anthony, Borchner, Jara

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

Amber Jara shared about the upcoming, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual “Thriving Children, Families and Communities” Conference being held at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney on September 16<sup>th</sup>. It is a free event and information can be found at: <https://www.nebraskachildren.org/thriving-conference-2025/thriving-overview.html>.

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

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with the Office of Economic Assistance at DHHS, shared an update that included DHHS having received a \$300K allocation for awarding intergenerational grants to place childcare programs in nursing/care facilities. The maximum award will be \$100K. Round five of applications closes 8/20, and there is hope for more interest. 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 an update about current Rule 11 revisions that are in process, saying a public hearing will occur in 5-6 weeks. Rule 11 refers to regulations by the NDE for approving prekindergarten programs and issuing early childhood education grants that focus on quality standards. Other updates included a “Teacher Assistant” position being created, clarification around suspension of children up to second grade, and wording that refers to curriculum being research-based. Melody can be reached at [melody.hobson@nebraska.gov](mailto:melody.hobson@nebraska.gov).

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

Steph Knust, State Head Start Director, shared a powerpoint with several updates about both Nebraska and National Head Start efforts including Nebraska program enrollment numbers and Collaboration Office projects occurring within a five-year period. Steph noted that FFY26 funding information has not yet been released, and that there are ongoing celebrations noting the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Head Start's founding. A resource page held a number of links with information. Steph can be reached at [steph.knust@nebraska.gov](mailto:steph.knust@nebraska.gov).

### **Part C Update**

Nebraska Part C Co-leads, Amy Bunnell and Jessica Anthony shared a program update that included a recap about the Part C Annual Performance Report having been submitted Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, after Council review and approval at the November ECICC meeting. She reminding the group about the process that occurs ahead of submitting the APR and how federal determinations are made. Nebraska was found to "Meet Requirements" and the APR can be seen at <http://end.ne.gov/cms/annual-performance-reports-apr>. Planning Region Team local level data on the APR targets can also be seen at <http://end.ne.gov/cms/regional-public-reporting-tables>. In addition, the IDEA Part C Application was submitted in May and Nebraska was given full approval of funding, that was slightly less than last year. 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).

### **Market Rate Survey**

Alexandra Daro, Director of Applied Research at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, shared a powerpoint update regarding the 2025 Nebraska Child Care Market Rate Survey report. Highlights from the report included the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile rates, factors that impact rate setting for providers, shifts of child care, average enrollment numbers compared to licensed capacity, total enrollment as a proportion of licensed capacity, providers' ideal enrollment numbers, barriers to participating in the child care subsidy program, and providers' reasons for not participating in the child care subsidy program. These findings, and more, can be found in the recently released report found [here](#). Alex can be reached at [adaro@nebraska.edu](mailto:adaro@nebraska.edu).

### **Parent Ambassador Program**

Ilissa Talkington, Parent Ambassador Program Manager with the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, joined virtually and shared a presentation about the program including its mission, vision statement and eligibility requirements. The year-long program meets bi-weekly exploring issues and commonalities and has shown to increase the civic engagement of its participants. The program is statewide and bi-lingual and accepts 25 applicants per year, with the next cohort scheduled to begin in September. Ilissa can be reached at [ifern@nebraskaeearly.org](mailto:ifern@nebraskaeearly.org), and the Parent Ambassador Program website is: <https://nebraskaeearly.org/parents/neambassadors/>.

### **Facilitator Report**

ECICC Facilitator Mary Phillips shared an update about membership to the Council. Having been in recent communication with Governor's office regarding vacancies, she shared optimism about having some of them filled soon. There appear to be applicants for every vacancy except the public health and head start tribal roles, and the Council was encouraged to consider possibilities for those positions. Should appointments be made, an orientation will be prepared. More information to come. Mary shared blank Biennial Report-out sheets and encouraged attendees to fill once out and reflect how the report has been personally shared. Mary can be reached at [dmphil2936@gmail.com](mailto:dmphil2936@gmail.com).

### **November 7th meeting & components**

The November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting may be held in-person depending upon appointments being made. More information to come. Members are encouraged to send agenda suggestions to Karen to share with the Steering Committee at the Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The meeting adjourned with consensus at 11:30a.m.