

Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan



LEAD WITH NEBRASKA'S VALUES FOR INTEGRATING THE STATE'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

The Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan is a dynamic plan by and for Nebraskans that seeks to ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood services. The plan was developed through a collaborative statewide process that began in 2019 with a comprehensive needs assessment, followed by conversations with stakeholders across the state. Stakeholders discussed key gaps and strengths in Nebraska's early childhood system and recommended how to fill the gaps based on their experiences as providers, early childhood professionals, teachers and administrators, community leaders, resource coordinators, and parents.

Stakeholders' recommendations informed development of the four interrelated goals of the strategic plan. In addition, stakeholders articulated themes that reflect the core values they believe should guide Nebraska's approach to integrating the state's early childhood system.

Values

The following shared values describe how stakeholders want Nebraska's early childhood system to work and how to go about achieving the goals of the strategic plan.

Equitable access for all children and families

No matter where a family lives or what challenges they face, including special health care needs and mental health needs, every child in Nebraska deserves access to quality early care and education and other essential services.

A whole child approach to healthy development

Children thrive best when supported by an early childhood system that is aligned around a philosophy of care and quality that incorporates physical, social, emotional, and educational needs of children and their families.

Shared responsibility for creating an effective early childhood system

Everyone—including parents, early childhood professionals, schools, businesses, community leaders, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and elected officials—has a vested interest in supporting the healthy development and learning of each child.

Community leadership and collaboration

Community leaders, including families and early childhood educators, work together to leverage local strengths and resources to determine how best to meet the needs of families with young children within specific communities.

Continuity of care

Policies and processes are most effective in supporting healthy development of children when they facilitate the coordination of resources, creating a more integrated early childhood system that provides seamless access to all services needed to support every child's development and well-being.

Wise stewardship of resources

Building on existing systems and partnerships, deliberate decisions are made based on the best available data, and strategies are chosen based on evidence of their effectiveness.

Continuous improvement

The integrated approach to building sustainability of ongoing needs assessment, strategic planning, and performance evaluation ensures that Nebraska expands its capacity for creating sustainable change at the community and state levels.

As we continue our conversations with diverse groups of partners and stakeholders in communities across the state, we will explore how these values can guide the work ahead to achieve the goals of the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan.

To join us for these conversations, register for an upcoming event here:

<http://bit.ly/nebraskaPDGcalendar>.

Facilitation of the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan is provided by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska as part of a broad collaborative effort of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and a number of other organizations.

This project is supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0040-01-00, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.