

NEBRASKA
PRESCHOOL
DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Renewal Year Three



Bi-Monthly Newsletter - December 2022

Aligning the Nebraska System



Nebraska's Statewide Strategic Plan Goal 4 emphasizes the importance of creating alignment "to support communities in creating an integrated and comprehensive mixed-delivery system for all children." Providers, coaches, educators, and other early childhood professionals are working to serve families. Communities are assessing their needs and trying to provide necessary supports for local families and early childhood professionals. State organizations are building systems designed to benefit those families and professionals.

But without alignment, without the crucial infrastructure that unites all levels of early childhood work, gaps occur. Developmental resources get overlooked, professional opportunities are missed, families and professionals hit dead ends in trying to meet their needs. Alignment opens communications channels and facilitates the movement of information so that it gets from those who provide help to those who need it. It assists organizations in understanding larger needs as well as specific local community needs. It saves duplication and unnecessary expenditures.

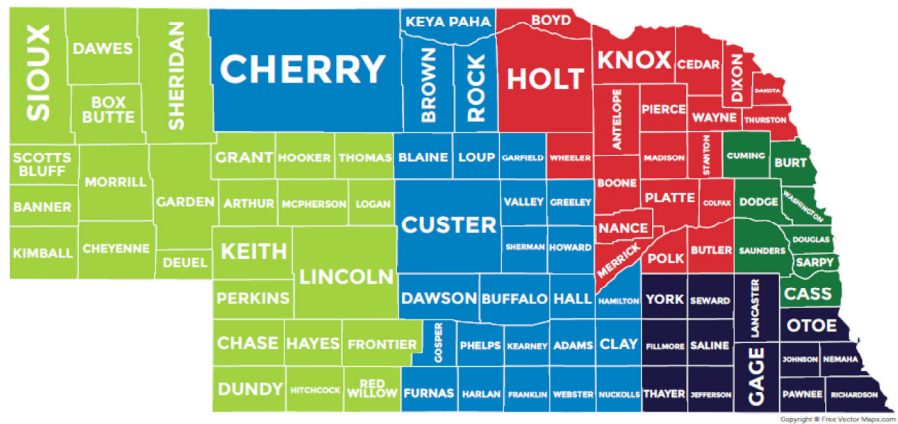
This issue of the PDG eNews focuses on work being done through the Preschool Development Grant that is building infrastructure from the community level to the state level.


PDG Events

Regional Coaching Buildout Provides Needed Structure





Nebraska's Early Learning Connection Coach Consultants







Panhandle ELC-CC
Sam Fisher
sfisher@esu13.org
ESUs 13, 15, 16
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
www.esu13.org




Central ELC-CC
Amy Sjolholm
asjolholm@esu10.org
ESUs 9, 10, 11, 17
Kearney, NE 68848
www.esu10.org



Northeast ELC-CC
Sara Ortiz
sortiz@esu1.org
ESUs 1, 7, 8
Wakefield, NE 68784
www.esu1.org



Southeast ELC-CC
Gina DeFreece
gina.defreece@esu6.org
ESUs 4, 5, 6, 18
Milford, NE 68405
www.esu6.org



Metro ELC-CC
Becky Morton
bmorton@esu3.org
ESUs 2, 3, 19
LaVista, NE 68128
www.esu3.org

November 2022

Tracy Went emphasizes the growth of coaching across the state, but asks an important question, “there is so much coaching going on and though so many supports exist, there is always more need. How can we continue to build those supports?” One way that PDG has provided important infrastructure and support is the buildout of a new coordinating position Tracy has assumed and the addition of extra coach consultants.

In 2017, representatives from early childhood initiatives that used coaching began a partnership chartered as the Coach Collaboration Team to develop an infrastructure that would offer support and professional development to coaches working in Nebraska’s early childhood system. A subgroup was formed and the Nebraska Early Childhood Coach Development Network was born. The Network is a first step toward providing a centralized structure of coaching for the state and has been enhanced by the group’s development of a standardized set of coaching principles and a more systematic approach to providing coaches with professional development opportunities.

In 2019, the group began formalizing those competencies into a document and hired two regional statewide coaching consultants.

Later, with the use of Preschool Development Grant funds, the Network was able to hire Tracy as the Coach Collaboration Specialist and three more coach consultants so that the state could be mapped into five regions, each with its own consultant. Regional consultants help to provide local structure by offering resources, support, and training opportunities along with opportunities for collaboration, such as Cadres, which are peer groups where, according to Tracy, coaches have “someone else to bounce ideas off of, where they use the same language.” In addition, consultants look for the types of coach-involved initiatives that operate in their area and surmise the resources needed as well as overall trends that need addressing, such as equity, which Tracy says has been a big focus.



Tracy Went

Coaches build a collaborative relationship to promote providers developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead to the use of best practices for working with young children and their families. Coaching involves observation, discussion, and reflection aimed at encouraging personal growth toward goals. The developing Network gives coaches facilitated community connections between coaches and helps link them to state-level organizations.

[Read the full article.](#)

Early Childhood Champions Boost Professionals



Christina Sigbornson knew from a young age that she wanted to teach but wasn't sure with what age group. Even though she thought it would be elementary students, she began working at a child development center while in college. That's where her career as an early childhood professional began. In her 23 years in the field, she has earned an Associate's Degree in General Education and is working toward another in Early Childhood for which she has received a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. She is now an early childhood professional at the Hamilton Heights Child Development Center in Omaha, where she has spent 8 of her 10 years there working with infants.

And her story could have ended there like so many who work in early childhood care and education and who dedicate their days to caring for our youngest, developing important bonds, helping them toward milestones, and too often being overlooked for the crucial work they do. But a recent phone call changed Christina's story. In November of 2022, she heard from Gina Ewing, the Quality Child Care Partnership Specialist at Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, who informed Christina she'd been chosen as an Early Childhood Champion.

Early Childhood Champions began when Jessie Rasmussen, President of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, noted a similar program in another state that recognized and rewarded providers. From there a collaboration between Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC), the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI), the Niemand Collaborative, and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCF) brought the idea to life in Nebraska.

[Read the full article.](#)



Needs Assessment PDG Progress Walk October 2022

Alexandra Daro, Ph.D.
Greg W. Welch, Ph.D.

Start early. Start well.

To learn more about how the Needs Assessment is promoting alignment in Nebraska, see this presentation.

Presentation Page

Shared Leadership and Financing Task Force Develop Alignment Plan

When it comes to alignment, the Nebraska Early Childhood Shared Leadership and Financing Task Force is crucial to building the infrastructure the state needs for creating a unified system from Nebraska's mixed-delivery system. The task force aims "to develop initial recommendations for achieving a fully funded and aligned system" and "to design a Nebraska-specific model as the vehicle for shared leadership and financing."

First Five Nebraska has recently used Preschool Development Grant funds to contract with national experts from P5 Fiscal Strategies, who will to assist in designing an implementation plan for the state based on a public-private hybrid model. The group will also conduct a fiscal analysis "to better understand the true costs of high-quality childcare and the revenues available to cover these costs." As part of this work, a Cost Modeling Advisory Workgroup comprised of representatives from public- and private-funding and childcare providers began in October.

Pritzker Children's Initiative funds have financed an equity feasibility analysis for ECIDS to be conducted by (IDEA) Consulting and aimed at "examining and defining the efforts necessary to achieve a data system capable of answering questions regarding equitable practices that may impact policies or funding streams on children, families, and providers."

[Read the November Update.](#)

First Steps Parent and Provider Quarterly

The fall issue of *First Steps* is now available. *First Steps* provides information important to parents and early childhood professionals and links them to resources from Preschool Development Grant initiatives, early childhood partners around the state, and to vital national sources. To see the fall issue or to sign up for *First Steps* click the button below.

Learn More about First Steps

PDG Brief Reports

Getting Ready

During this program year, our team has transformed the Getting Ready training approach to be responsive to the needs of early childhood educators in all settings and support their quests for developing collaborative and strengths-based partnerships with families. In addition to our home visitor virtual training series, we are also offering virtual, on-demand modules to increase access for center-based early childhood educators. All training is followed by one-on-one coaching. This year, we are working with 96 home visitation and center-based educators from close to 23 different Nebraska communities to support their use of the Getting Ready approach with families.

For more information on Getting Ready, please contact [Lisa Knoche](#).

Ready Rosie

Change is needed for growth! Flowers die in the winter to become stronger versions of themselves in the spring, and, like that, Ready Rosie has undergone changes to be able to grow into an improved version. The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) has placed all 400 plus Nebraska sites who use Ready Rosie under the organization to provide personal support. This early education tool assists educators in deepening and scaling learning through family engagement by using the unique Modeling Moments videos. NCFL, through a partnership with Teaching Strategies, Nebraska Department of Education, and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, collaborates in providing this opportunity.

For more information on Ready Rosie, please contact [Monica Huber](#).

Circle of Security Classroom Approach

Circle of Security Classroom (COSC) is designed to enhance teachers' abilities to form secure relationships with children. This approach allows teachers to gain more awareness of the underlying social emotional needs communicated by a child's behavior and to build more confidence in meeting these attachment needs within the relationship with the child.

One provider said of the training, "Everything has changed. The way we, as staff, talk about kids, think about kids, and even ourselves. When we get ourselves to really step back for a second and reflect, everything seems so much clearer."

To date, ten facilitators have completed training, five of the fifty classes have been completed, monthly facilitator calls are occurring, fidelity coaching will be offered, and thirty-five providers

have received stipends.

For more on the Circle of Security Classroom approach, please contact [Tracy Gordon](#).

Learning Begins at Birth

The Learning Begins at Birth (LBAB) initiative continues momentum by sending out thousands of copies of the instructional booklet each month. Since January of this year, over 34,000 copies of this resource have been distributed across the state. This booklet has been distributed to birthing hospitals, health practitioners, childcare providers, local public schools, health departments, and so many other community partners across Nebraska.

In October, the First Five Nebraska team presented on LBAB at the Conference for Families and Parents of Small Children. The video clip that was shared is available to [watch online](#). The Learning Begins at Birth [website](#) provides information on the initiative and how to order booklets.

To learn more about Learning Begins at Birth, please contact [Amanda Felton](#).

Child Care Essentials

The demand for accessible and affordable childcare in Nebraska is significant—75% of children under age 6 live in homes where adults work outside the home. Often finding quality childcare can feel overwhelming. To help with making these important decisions, the “Child Care Essentials: Choosing Quality Child Care in Nebraska” guide was developed to provide information for what “quality” means—with age-specific sections for early childhood and for out-of-school programs.

Holly Hatton-Bowers, who led efforts to develop the guide, says that “finding quality childcare is an important decision for a family. We hope this guide helps in making this decision so the important adults in a child’s life can know that their child is safe and receiving quality care while meeting their family needs.” The guide is available to [download](#) for no cost.

For more information about Child Care Essentials, please contact [Holly Hatton-Bowers](#) or [Jaci Foged](#).

Click Here to Subscribe

Stay up-to-date on early childcare initiatives by subscribing to the PDG eNews.

PDG has new Facebook

Follow Us on Facebook

Follow Us on Twitter

**and Twitter Pages--Please
be sure to follow us.**

Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about newsletter content, PDG-related activities, or partner organizations, fill out the form on our "Contact Us" page, and we'll find you answers.

Get Answers to Your Questions



PDG Partners

Nebraska's PDG work is led by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) under the authority of Governor Pete Ricketts, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the University of Nebraska system, and many other partners.

This project is made possible by funding received through Grant Number 90TP0079-03-00 , of the USDHHS-Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Nebraska Department of Education; and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, following grant requirements of 70% federal funding with 30% match from state and private resources. 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.

For questions or comments regarding the Preschool Development Grant, please contact:

Shannon Mitchell-Boekstal, Assistant Vice President Preschool Development

For more information or to subscribe to the enewsletter, visit **Preschool Development Grant**.

Our Contact Information

Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
215 Centennial Mall South
Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-476-9401
<http://www.NebraskaChildren.org>

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage email preferences](#)