

# 2022

## Impact Report

Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative 

# Imagine What's Possible

## Message From the CEO

It's no secret to those of us in the field that there exists a great need to radically transform our approach to child care and education. We hear it firsthand from providers every day; long-standing issues like low wages, a lack of benefits, and a desire for professional respect all contribute to the child care crisis. When child care businesses close and providers leave the field, not only do children and families suffer the consequences, but the health and wellbeing of their communities do, too.

The child care industry has long been the unsung hero supporting working families, and now, more and more Nebraskans are beginning to see the link between access to child care, helping workers provide for their families, and keeping businesses strong. A recent survey stated that 81% of registered voters in Nebraska say access to quality, affordable child care is essential or very important to strengthening Nebraska's economy.\*

\*We Care for Kids 2023 statewide survey

**The facts are this: Nebraskans need and understand the importance of more accessible, high-quality child care businesses and a sustainable, career-oriented early childhood system that attracts and retains educators into the field. At NECC, our work in the last year focused on just that:**

- We welcomed our inaugural class of Parent Ambassadors, developing parent and child care provider leaders who advocate on behalf of themselves, their children, and their communities
- With the addition of three new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships across five locations in Douglas County, we created opportunity for more child care providers to access these grant funds and for our most vulnerable populations of children to access high-quality care, education, and health services
- We completed our Child Care Network evaluation to measure its impact on providers during the program's first two years
- We introduced the Early Childhood Champion awards in partnership with the We Care for Kids campaign to recognize and celebrate Nebraska child care providers' invaluable contributions to their communities
- To support greater client engagement and streamline program experience, we implemented new technology platforms across the organization
- We launched our DEI group to better instill an inclusive and responsive workplace culture, which includes quarterly trainings in areas of DEI in which staff have expressed interest
- We filled key positions across the departments of Development, Early Head Start, and Finance to sustain the health and growth of our organization

When I think of the future of early childhood in Nebraska and beyond, I'm invigorated by the endless opportunity to impact those we serve both inside and outside of our organization. The early childhood industry needs champions – people who believe in a future that works for all, who actively challenge the status quo, and who agree that anything is possible with the right approach and collaborative spirit. We all have a seat at the table, and I invite you to pull up a chair as together, we imagine what's possible.



*Sarah Ann Kotchian*  
**Sarah Ann Kotchian**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Expanding Community Partnerships

## Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

This year marked a milestone for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programming, as NECC welcomed five new community child care providers to the list of partners. Through EHS-CCP funding, NECC is able to better serve the diverse students and families who benefit most from the programming and services.

### Our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Locations:

- BRIGHTEN OUR FUTURE EARLY LEARNING CENTER
- CHILDREN’S RESPITE CARE CENTER (NORTHWEST)
- CHILDREN’S RESPITE CARE CENTER (SOUTHWEST)
- CHILD SAVING INSTITUTE (DODGE)
- CHILD SAVING INSTITUTE (SPELLMAN)
- EARLY LEARNING CENTER AT GATEWAY
- EARLY LEARNING CENTER AT KENNEDY
- EARLY LEARNING CENTER AT SKINNER



According to NECC’s 2022 Community Assessment, 3,819 children ages 0-3 in Douglas County are income-eligible for Early Head Start. NECC is able to serve 6.8% of those children.

**FEDERAL REVIEW** – In June 2022, the Office of Head Start visited NECC to conduct a Focus Area Two monitoring review. No deficiencies were identified during the review.



REVENUES	BUDGET	ACTUAL
EARLY HEAD START (OPERATING)	\$5,858,312	\$5,468,958
EARLY HEAD START T&TA	\$122,653	\$122,653
NON-FEDERAL SHARE	\$1,374,842	\$1,373,595
TOTAL REVENUES	\$7,355,807	\$6,965,206

EXPENSES	BUDGET	ACTUAL
PERSONNEL & FRINGE BENEFITS	\$2,009,603	\$1,998,466
TRAVEL/TRAINING	\$122,653	\$122,653
SUPPLIES	\$197,528	\$45,207
CONTRACTUAL	\$4,788,531	\$4,582,169
OTHER	\$237,492	\$216,711
TOTAL REVENUES	\$7,355,807	\$6,965,206



# Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership



294

TOTAL CHILDREN SERVED

261

TOTAL FAMILIES SERVED

58%

BLACK

32%

WHITE

11%

MULTIRACIAL/  
OTHER

36%

HISPANIC

51%

FEMALE

49%

MALE

11%

VERIFIED  
FOR SPECIAL  
EDUCATION

95%

FREE/REDUCED  
LUNCH

22%

DUAL  
LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS

## Health & Wellbeing

Strengthening child development requires a holistic approach, one that supports the learning environment and health and wellbeing of each child. Each enrolled family has access to a Health Specialist who shares resources and referrals for health care needs including dental, hearing, vision, and more.

\*Data is representative of available documentation provided by the family

99% WITH HEALTH INSURANCE

23%\* UP TO DATE ON MEDICAL SERVICES

90% WITH A DENTAL HOME

38%\* UP TO DATE ON DENTAL SERVICES

99% WITH A MEDICAL HOME

97% UP TO DATE WITH  
IMMUNIZATIONS OR EXEMPT

## School Readiness

NECC uses the Developmental Domain framework to identify and evaluate how many children meet or exceed expectations in key areas: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Math.

92% SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

85% LITERACY

94% COGNITIVE

83% LANGUAGE

94% PHYSICAL

83% MATH

## Family Engagement

As part of EHS-CCP's comprehensive services, each eligible child is paired with a Family Engagement Specialist who provides support for family wellbeing and self-sufficiency. Family Engagement Specialists meet monthly with families to complete needs assessments, set and measure goals, and provide parent education opportunities and community resource referrals.

792 POSITIVE PARENT/CHILD  
INTERACTION GOALS CREATED

74% MADE PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

100% RECEIVED PARENT EDUCATION

# Teen & Young Parent Program (TYPP)

In 2022, NECC kicked off the Teen and Young Parent Program expansion, extending services to 20 additional counties in Nebraska. Through the dedicated work of its service partners, more young parents in Nebraska have access to a structured program that provides encouragement, education, and resources from day one.

371 PARENTS SERVED

## Our Teen and Young Parent Program Partners

- BG Counseling
- Boys Town
- Child Saving Institute
- Community and Family Partnership
- Fremont Family Coalition
- Norfolk Family Coalition
- Restoration and Peace
- Southeast Nebraska Collaborative
- Visiting Nurse Association

“Thank you so much for everything you and this program have done for me and my family. It has made me a better mom for my kids. I am able to be the mom I didn’t have growing up.”

- TYPP Client, Child Saving Institute, 2017 - 2022 -

# Community Response Program (CRP)

212 FAMILIES SERVED

566 CHILDREN SERVED

- 60% HOUSING
- 27% UTILITIES
- 7% TRANSPORTATION
- 3% PARENTING
- 2% OTHER (INC. TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION, PHYSICAL/DENTAL HEALTH, DAILY LIVING)
- 1% LEGAL

NECC’s Central Navigation received a referral from OneWorld Community Health Centers for a family of 4 who had been struggling due to a loss of income. Mom has been battling health issues, which took away her ability to work. With frequent visits to the doctor, a lack of transportation, rising costs, and mounting stress about her medical bills, mom became severely depressed. As she did not drive, the family’s most urgent needs were transportation to get to medical appointments and food.

NECC’s Central Navigator signed them up for the food delivery program and was able to purchase bus tickets so mom would have transportation to and from medical appointments. When the navigator gave her the news, she cried. Mom stated that her depression was severe that day because her family had run out of food; she had lost all hope before receiving the news about being approved for support.




She was surprised how quickly the food program made a delivery; she said she cooked the food right away and it was delicious. Mom is currently in therapy for her depression and will continue to receive those services until she is comfortable being discharged.

# Innovating in the Business of Child Care

## Quality Child Care Partnerships

Since 2014, NECC has worked to address the state’s child care crisis by bravely challenging the status quo, inclusively innovating with the child care provider community, and taking calculated risks to meet the unique needs of those they serve. In August of 2020, we launched the Child Care Network to address the industry’s greatest challenges – antiquated business practices, low wages, isolation, and large numbers of educators leaving the field.

The network was built on these principles:

-  Elevating child care provider voices
-  Strengthening business practices
-  Engaging adults with children in high-quality early childhood programs

Today, these goals have translated into an array of innovative and unique programs that support child care providers’ educational and professional pursuits. A majority of the Child Care Network’s programs and services are available in both English and Spanish languages and are offered at no cost to providers.

### National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation

Resources, mentorship, technical assistance, and fellowship supporting NAFCC Accreditation

### Family Child Care Network Advisory Council

Program development resource group and leadership opportunity for Network participants

### Nebraska Exchange

Repository for ECE policies, forms, regulations, guidance, discounts, & more

### Business Training Series

10-week course that supports sustainable family child care businesses

### Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

Nationally recognized credential training for early childhood educators

### Elevating Engagement Quality Enhancement Kits

Subscription based resources for family child care programs in Douglas County

### Elevate

A business summit designed specifically for child care programs

### Licensing Toolkit

Supporting family child care educators with obtaining licensure

### Elevated Network powered by Wonderschool

Child care business management technology paired with high-touch mentoring and resources

### Pie for Providers

Child care subsidy management technology



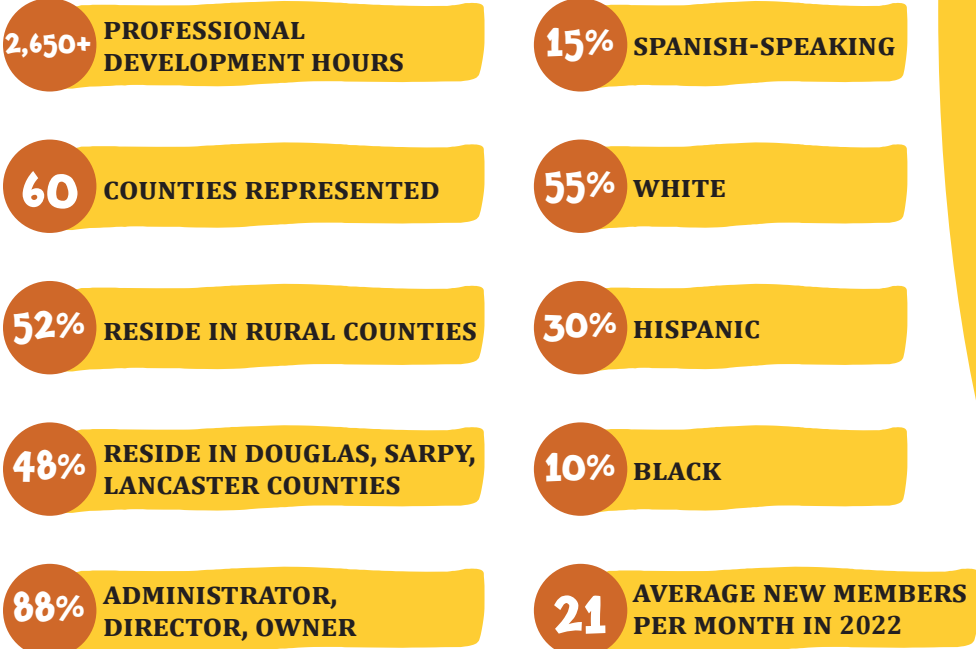
## Evaluating Impact Of The Child Care Network

From its inception to today, more than 800 child care providers in Nebraska have access to resources that help build business competencies, strengthen access to technology and automation, support no-cost licensing, and much more.

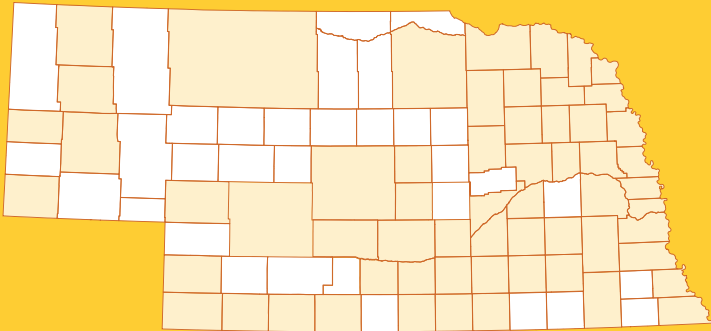
In 2022, the Child Care Network grew to serve **sixty counties** in Nebraska while maintaining a priority to engage providers in historically under-resourced neighborhoods of North and South Omaha. To evaluate its impact, NECC sent a survey to all Network members who, in the last two years, had participated in one or more program components. Survey topics included satisfaction with services, program activities, and business outcomes.

To read the full report, visit [nebraskaeearly.org/impact](https://nebraskaeearly.org/impact)

### Child Care Network at a Glance



## Network Representation by County



**647** NETWORK PARTICIPANTS



Photo by: Catherine Schochenmaier, Wee Wonders Child Care

## Improving Business Practices

**365** BUSINESS TRAINING SERIES PARTICIPANTS

**60** ELEVATED NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

**54** LICENSING TOOLKIT PARTICIPANTS

**92%** OF EDUCATORS AGREED THE CHILD CARE NETWORK ACTIVITIES WERE HELPFUL AND **94%** AGREED THAT THEY FELT SUPPORTED IN THEIR JOB.

## Improving Interactions With Children

**152** EDUCATORS COMPLETED CDA TRAINING

**61** EDUCATORS ENGAGED WITH OUR VIRTUAL LEARNING LIBRARY

**20** EDUCATORS RECEIVED QUALITY ENHANCEMENT KIT SUBSCRIPTIONS

“I owe all my success to the Child Care Network. I would not have been able to further my education without them. This is taking so much stress off me. I wish more people would take part in this amazing opportunity.”

- Child Care Network Member -



# Engaging Parent Leaders

## Parent Ambassadors

In January 2022, NECC welcomed its inaugural class of Parent Ambassadors. Parent Ambassadors is a year-long leadership and advocacy program for parents and child care providers of early learners in Nebraska. The goal of the program is to develop parent leaders and support them in advocating for their children, themselves, and their communities.

Throughout their program year, Parent Ambassadors participated in and led many exciting initiatives. They learned how to track legislative bills, met with grassroots advocacy organizations from across the state, wrote letters to representatives, and attended a Legislative Day at the Nebraska Capitol, where they observed a floor debate and got to speak with members of the Legislature.

### Parent Ambassadors Class of 2022

AMY BOYER  
ASHLEY PALUMBO  
ASHLEY SCHMIT  
BRANDIE HOLLINGSWORTH  
JES FELDER  
JESS PARKER

JUNIOR SANABRIA  
KELSEE SAYER  
KHE'YANA OVERSTREET  
MADISON REIMAN  
OLIVIA BEASLEY  
ROBIN WILKINS

SHANNON HAMPSON  
STEPHANIE GOCHOEL  
TANA EDDY  
THALIA WILSON  
LATONYA RICHARDSON ORDUÑA

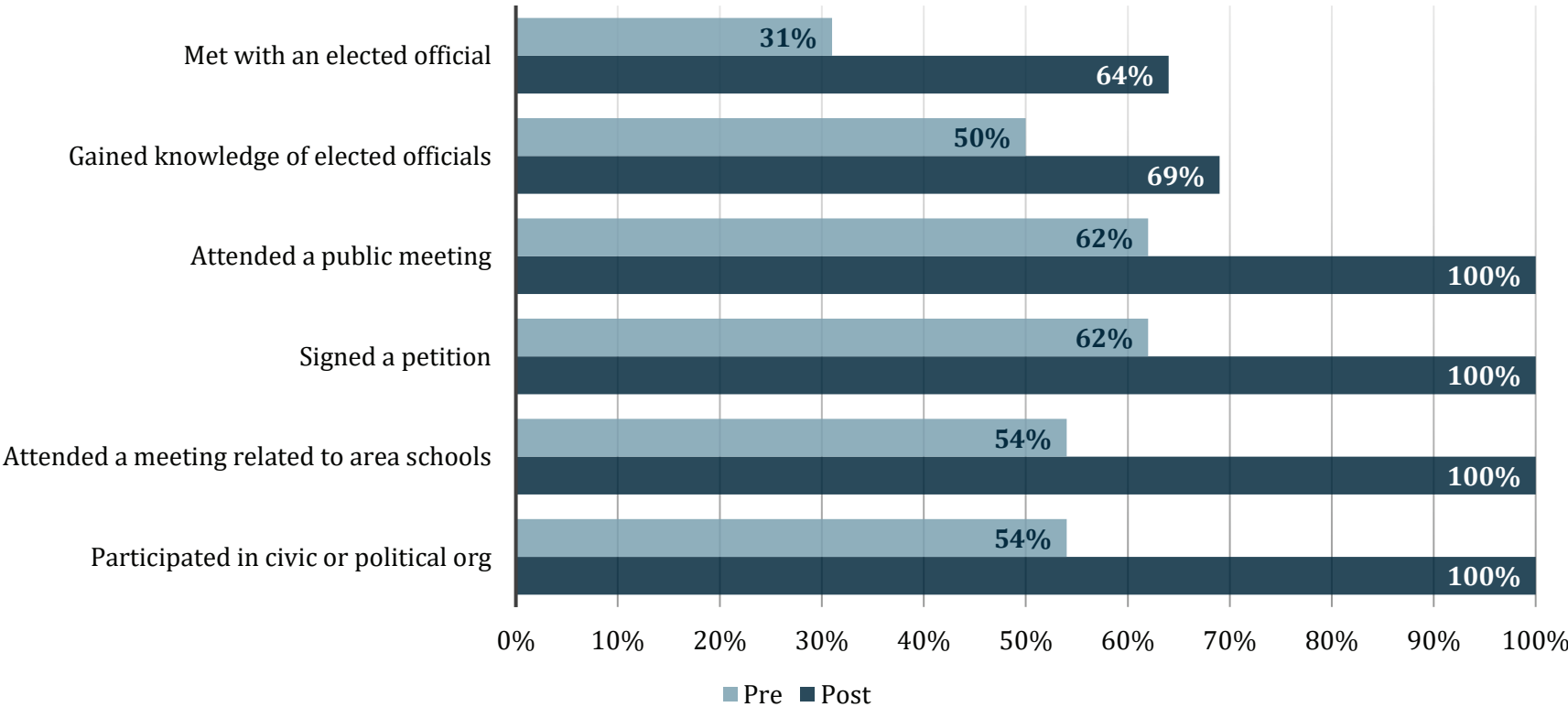


## Parent Leader Outcomes Survey

As part of evaluating program impact, the inaugural class of Parent Ambassadors were surveyed at the beginning and end of their program year. In addition to changes in civic attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, the majority of parents reported that, as a direct result of Parent Ambassadors, they had thought about or taken steps to make changes in their personal lives, such as furthering their education, changing or advancing their careers, and making changes in their emotional, social, or physical health.

You can see the full report here [nebraskaeearly.org/impact](https://nebraskaeearly.org/impact)

### Parent Ambassadors showed double-digit growth in civic action from pre- to post-program participation.



Parents showed substantial growth in knowledge of elected officials and voting attitudes and behaviors

100% CONTACTED AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

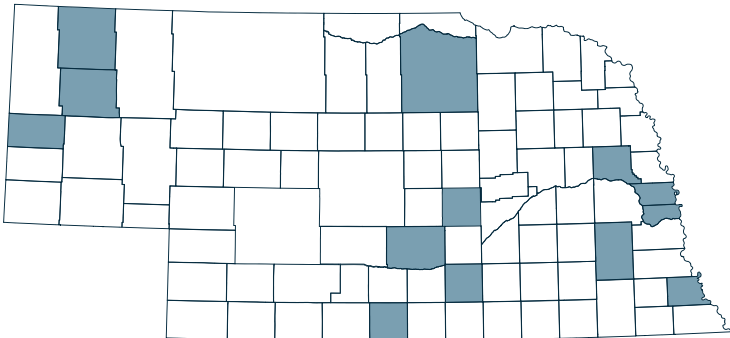
93% BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO VOTE IN ALL ELECTIONS

75% PROBABLY OR DEFINITELY PLAN TO STAY CONNECTED WITH THE PROGRAM



“I have made connections to leaders in my field that have [helped] to find a true passion for early childhood care and rural communities and given me a platform to learn and share my passion.”  
- 2022 Parent Ambassador -

Network Representation by County



Outside of organized program activities, Parent Ambassadors strived to meet their individual goals in a number of inspiring ways:

- » Attended the first National Parent Ambassador Institute in Scottsdale, Arizona
- » Met with Children’s Hospital Board to discuss the change of screening policy for parental mental health
- » Spoke on panels for early childhood education conferences
- » Sat on the Parent Policy Council for Early Head Start in rural counties
- » Testified for LB838 and LB702 and held voter registration parties
- » Worked with a local nonprofit to expand resources for Hispanic families
- » Met with their Senator to share concerns, ideas, and offer solutions
- » Joined the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Program

“This group has given me the courage to step out and use my gifts to help and encourage others.”  
- 2022 Parent Ambassador -





# Uplifting Provider Voices

## Voices From the Field:

### Informing Efforts to Strengthen Omaha's Early Childhood Workforce

To address the ongoing early childhood workforce crisis, NECC embarked on the Omaha Early Childhood Workforce Initiative in the fall of 2022 with three goals in mind:

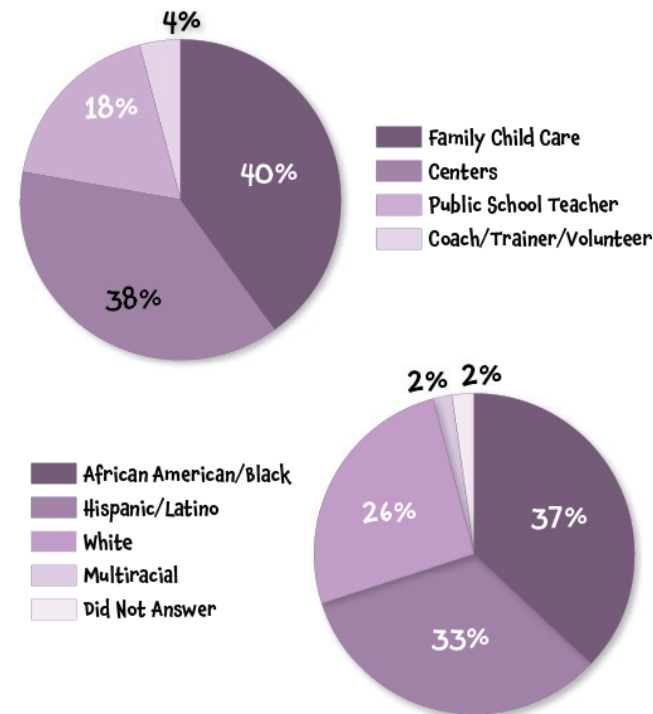
1. Increasing the number of competent early childhood professionals
2. Better defining the career lattice, and
3. Ensuring the system incentivizes more qualified professionals to serve the youngest children and families with the fewest resources

Through large then small group facilitated discussions, NECC engaged 86 participants in North and South Omaha to share their experiences and ideas for how to create a sustainable early childhood workforce. The large group discussions were designed to elicit feedback from practitioners while the Solutions Labs were designed to dive more deeply into the key themes that emerged during the Community Forums, with an emphasis on exploring potential solutions.

### The challenges that emerged as top priorities for practitioners were:

- Ambiguity and lack of professional recognition are roadblocks to recruitment and retention
- Professional development opportunities are not consistently relevant or responsive
- Access to health insurance is essential
- Practitioners do not feel valued or respected
- Practitioners want to be equipped to lead systems change

### Community Forum Racial & Ethnic Diversity and Area of Profession



“We have to, as a community, as a country, start treating our teachers like teachers, like the professionals that they are, and there have to be resources to get them educated and to pay them properly.”

- Community Forum Participant -

### Based on practitioner priorities, NECC offered the following recommendations:

- Scale existing and/or establish a central point to help practitioners navigate resources
- Modernize and enhance the responsiveness of Nebraska's professional development system
- Address the delay with fingerprint results
- Establish a clear pathway and paid internships for prospective practitioners in Omaha
- Maximize available health insurance resources
- Expand efforts to elevate and recognize outstanding practitioners
- Prioritize business training and automation in workforce solutions
- Align communication methods with practitioner preference
- Establish grassroots infrastructure
- Elevate parent and provider voices

To address the workforce challenges facing the early childhood education sector, it is crucial to prioritize the voices of the workforce. By doing so, we can ensure high-quality early childhood education for children and support the workforce's well-being.

The Omaha Early Childhood Workforce Initiative report will be published in 2023.

## Celebrating Nebraska's Early Childhood Workforce

NECC, in partnership with the We Care for Kids campaign, launched the Early Childhood Champion awards to highlight the importance of the early childhood workforce. Over a three-week nomination period, NECC received nearly 500 nominations of early childhood educators across the state from the parents, families, and communities they serve.

From October 2022 to September 2023, 24 Early Childhood Champions will receive a \$1,000 gift, a plaque, media recognition, and more in honor of their commitment to excellence and service to their communities.

#### October 2022 Winners

Alisha Perkins, Omaha  
Ashley Garrison, Beatrice

#### November 2022 Winners

Jannette Vilela, Omaha  
Shannon Stutzman, Columbus

#### December 2022 Winners

Christina Sigbornson, Omaha  
Jami Legate, Norfolk

“When I was notified that I had won, my breath was taken away. Winning this award means that I am seen as a professional.”

- Christina Sigbornson, Omaha -





# Supporting Our Work

NECC would like to recognize the people who create impact inside and outside of our organization each and every day.

Andrea Jahn, JD  
AnnMarie Marlier  
Betty Harris\*  
Christian Espinosa Torres\*\*

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## Thank You To Our Funders and NECC Staff



# Imagine Your Impact

With your help, we can continue expanding our impact for the future of Nebraska's children.  
You can join NECC in providing support, resources, and training to strengthen early learning across Nebraska.

Donate: [nebraskaeearly.org/donate](https://nebraskaeearly.org/donate)

