

10th Anniversary

Impact Report

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nebraska early childhood
COLLABORATIVE

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The Nebraska
Early Childhood
Collaborative (NECC)
harnesses the potential
of providers to deliver
high quality early learning
opportunities through
access to business
resources, innovative
partnerships, and
educational support.

VISION

More children.
Prepared for school.
Prepared for life.

V
A
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Mission first



Raise the bar



Bring it



Own it



Pull up a chair

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Message from the CEO



Sarah Ann Kotchian,
Chief Executive Officer

Dear friends of NECC,

In our 10th year of serving child care providers and families with young children in Nebraska, we have enjoyed celebrating our collaborations and underscoring why the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC) was created in 2014.

NECC started as a strategic initiative of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. Since our inception, NECC has grown into a leading organization that addresses the diverse needs of the child care workforce and the families they serve through innovative programming, collaborative partnerships, and strategic investment.

Countless hours, 700+ years of combined experience, and millions of dollars in state, federal, and private



funding have helped us get to where we are today. I've had the privilege of witnessing this work in action for the last six years and can say with confidence that NECC is one of the most innovative nonprofits in Nebraska. We have figured out how to serve parents and providers based on immediate needs, while also advocating for long-term solutions.

I'm honored to share these stories and more in our 10th anniversary impact report. This report details a decade of work, including our work in 2024, represented by our core measurement categories: Innovate, Collaborate, and Serve.

As we reflect on a decade of dedication, growth, and impact, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support from our

community, partners, and stakeholders. Together, we will forge ahead, committed to serving and uplifting our community with the same passion and drive that has guided us these past ten years.

Here's to a future where every child care provider and the children and families they serve have the opportunity to thrive.

“NECC is one of the most innovative nonprofits in Nebraska. We have figured out how to serve parents and providers based on immediate needs, while also advocating for long-term solutions.”

SARAH ANN KOTCHIAN
CEO AT NECC

10-Year Highlights

“What we hoped originally from NECC was that it would provide an efficient, high-quality administrative support for the five early childhood programs we were directly supporting. It soon became apparent that there was so much more potential.

JESSIE RASMUSSEN
BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD FUND

2014

- Established as a strategic initiative of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund

2015

- Awarded **\$2.7 million** Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grant
- Began **serving children** in Omaha in temporary classrooms in Ashland Park Robbins and Skinner Elementary Schools
- Launched the **Nebraska Exchange**, a resource rich website for child care providers

2016

- Hired NECC's **first CEO**, Shannon Cotsoradis

2017

- NECC **merged** with Early Childhood Services
- Launched a **substitute teacher pool** to support the Early Learning Centers we served

2018

- CDA classes** opened to the community, serving more than just our EHS partner sites
- Served more than **600 children** across **258 families** in Douglas County with emergency financial support through the **Community Response Program (CRP)**
- Underwent our first **strategic planning** process

2019

- Hosted the first **Elevate Conference**, a summit for the business of child care
- Partnered with **All Our Kin**, launching two core programs for providers
- Began sponsoring the **Kids Can Can Do Provider Award**
- Added **two more** EHS classrooms at the Omaha Early Learning Center at Skinner, increasing the number of children served to **176**
- Awarded the **EHS-CCP expansion grant** for **104** additional slots, growing capacity to **280** children and families

2020

- Hosted **Elevate20**
- Moved** into current office in North Omaha
- During COVID-19, made trainings available online, expanding access **statewide**
- Launched the **NECC Child Care Network**
- Sent the first Family Child Care Network **newsletter** to **~170 subscribers**

2021

- Hosted **Elevate21**
- Published a **statewide report** on how access to capital shapes the child care sector in Nebraska
- Partnered with **SHINE Early Learning**
- Launched **Parent Ambassadors** to support leadership and advocacy skills in parents and caregivers of young children

2022

- Hosted **Elevate22**
- Developed the **Omaha Early Childhood Workforce Initiative** to address workforce crisis
- Launched the **Early Childhood Champion awards**, recognized **24** child care providers in NE with a **\$1,000** gift
- Published the first **Child Care Network report**
- Expanded** EHS services in Omaha through partnerships with **Child Saving Institute** and **CRCC**

2023

- Hosted the first **Child Care Village** in our parking lot, connecting members of North Omaha with community child care programs
- Reached **1,000th member** of NECC's Child Care Network
- Parent Ambassadors became a member of the United Parent Leaders Action Network (**UPLAN**)
- Expanded programs and services across **79 Nebraska counties**

2024

- Hosted **Elevate24**
- Celebrated our **10th anniversary**
- Supported the only **3** family child care providers in NE to become **accredited** through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- NECC Road Trip** to western NE to visit members of our Family Child Care Network Advisory Council

6

7

10 Years of Innovating

NECC designs, develops, and deploys new initiatives that address longstanding and emerging needs to drive lasting improvements for child care providers and families with young children in Nebraska.



Launched the **Family Child Care Licensing Toolkit**, adding **63** new licensed programs in Nebraska serving **600+** children with **50** more programs in progress to be licensed.



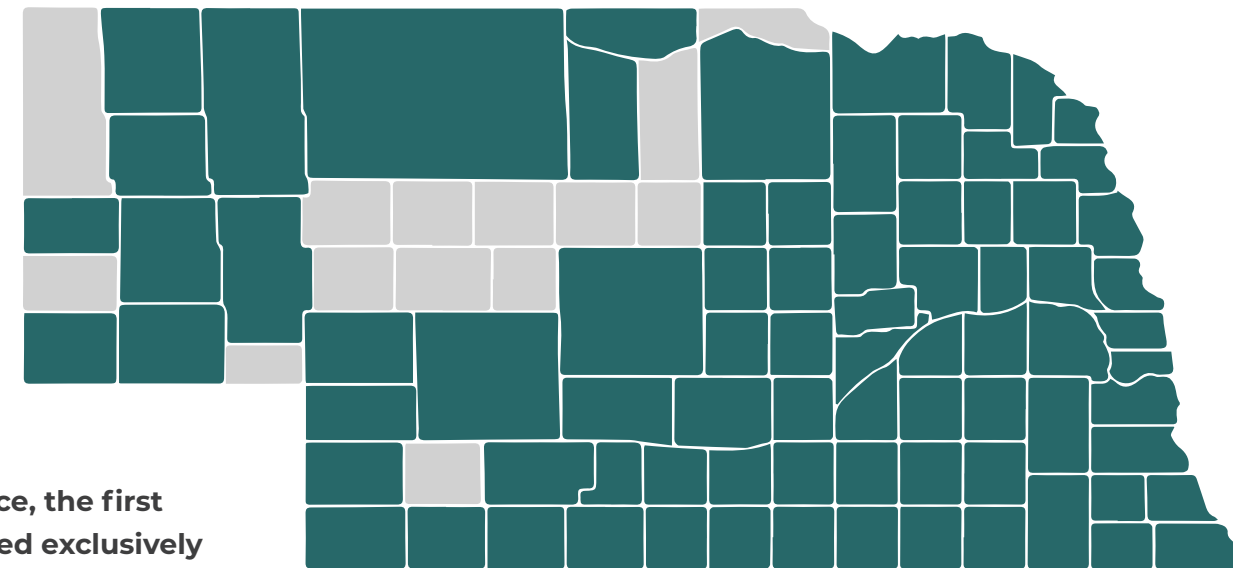
Awarded one of the **first** Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants in the country in **2015**.



Created **Parent Ambassadors**, a leadership and advocacy program for providers and parents of young children in Nebraska.



Statewide Reach



Launched the **Elevate** conference, the first and only provider summit designed exclusively to elevate the business of child care in Nebraska.

Transitioned to **fully remote** operations during **COVID-19**, allowing staff to continue offering professional development for providers and support for families and children while **expanding program access statewide**.

Established one of the largest statewide child care networks in the country in 2020, amassing over **1,800 members** across **85%** of Nebraska's counties as of today.

Spent **.84 cents** of every **\$1** raised on programs in 2023, above the nonprofit average for cost per dollar raised.

“When I started this path, I had no idea all the many procedures [for licensing]. I had the idea that because I was Hispanic it was more difficult for me because of the language. There were many assumptions, but with the help of the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, and my mentor...I was able to be the first Hispanic [provider] in Fremont to obtain the license.”

CHILD CARE PROVIDER,
FREMONT, NE



10 a decade of innovation
INSPIRED BY NEBRASKA PROVIDERS

10 Years of Collaborating

NECC partners with child care providers; families with young children; and local, state, and national organizations to enhance collective efforts for early childhood in Nebraska.



1 → 3

Expanded from one to three partners across seven sites through our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships with Educare of Omaha, Inc., Child Saving Institute, and CRCC.



\$800,000

Distributed nearly \$800,000 in public and private funding directly to child care providers for Early Learning Scholarships to support quality and affordability for the families they serve since 2021.



\$2.7 million

Served as Douglas County's central point of intake and the financial administrator for the distribution of \$2.7 million in federal and private funding to support child care providers and families with children during COVID. \$1.6 million of these funds supported teen and young parents.

“ NECC’s impact has extended far beyond what we thought. You increasingly see the tendrils of NECC touching all sorts of things.

**ERIC BUCHANAN,
BUFFETT EARLY
CHILDHOOD FUND**

Office Expansion

Merged with Early Childhood Services in 2017, nearly doubling the size of the office and expanding NECC to two physical locations.

Shared Services

Provided accounting, finance, and human resources services to Educare of Omaha, Inc., the Early Learning Centers at Gateway, Kennedy, and Skinner, and Educare Lincoln* for six years.

*NECC continues to provide all accounting, finance, and human resource services to Educare Lincoln.

National Parent Recognition

Accepted into the United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN), representing Nebraska Parent Ambassadors as part of a national united voice for parent action.

Capital Access Report

Published the Capital Access report in partnership with First Children's Finance, outlining what funding is needed, and available, to start or expand child care businesses in Nebraska.



10 Years of Serving



NECC offers customized resources and direct supports to meet the ongoing needs of child care providers and families with young children in Nebraska.

Scan to read our
Early Head Start
Annual Reports



“ A mother of seven, who worked two jobs while going to college, was in our [Early Head Start] program from the beginning. She participated in Policy Council, became a Parent Ambassador, and is now being asked to serve on a board. That’s the kind of impact NECC has.

MARY LARIVIERE,
DIRECTOR OF EARLY HEAD START AT NECC

Throughout NECC’s 10 years, \$116 million in federal, state, and private funding has passed through to support programs and administration, child care providers, and families and children.

**\$116
million**

Provided comprehensive services, access to high-quality early childhood education, and distributed over \$40 million in federal funding to support 1,796 children in 895 different families since 2015 through our EHS-CCP grant.

**\$40
million**



- 44% of staff are non-white and 15% of staff are bilingual in English and Spanish, allowing us to better serve the communities in which we work.
- Offer the 1,800+ members in the Child Care Network resources to help improve business practices, ability to obtain licensure, and support their professional development.
- Engaged over 300 participants monthly in 2024 with high-quality early childhood training opportunities.
- Supported a collective 463 hours of training and events in 2023 in our office space, establishing NECC as a trusted resource for community partners.

“ We saw a need to provide more services for infants and toddlers, but we also hoped to make the lives of directors in North and South Omaha easier by helping with the business side of child care.

GLADYS HAYNES,
BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD FUND

700+ years

The NECC staff collectively represents 700+ years of early childhood experience


10 a decade of innovation
INSPIRED BY NEBRASKA PROVIDERS




2024 Impact



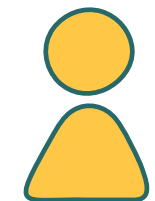
 Launched Essentials for Early Educators, a program designed exclusively for providers new to the field of early childhood.
 • **23 graduates**

 Hosted Elevate24, welcoming approximately 100 attendees from 23 counties across Nebraska to our office for a day of child care business development, networking, and no-cost professional headshots.

 Transformed our Resource Center into an intentional space for child care providers to access technology, die cutting and laminating tools, meeting spaces, and more at no cost.

INNOVATE
 NECC designs, develops, and deploys new initiatives that address longstanding and emerging needs to drive lasting improvements for child care providers and families with young children in Nebraska.

COLLABORATE
 NECC partners with child care providers; families with young children; and local, state, and national organizations to enhance collective efforts for early childhood in Nebraska.



Documentary Screening & Discussion
 Hosted a documentary screening and discussion on affordable child care in partnership with Film Streams, Parent Ambassadors, a Child Care Network provider, and State Sen. Wendy DeBoer.

Child Care Catalyst Launch
 Launched the Child Care Catalyst in partnership with I Be Black Girl, a unique business accelerator program specifically designed for Black women/femme owned child care programs in Omaha.

Child Care Network Newsletter
 Distributed a monthly child care resource newsletter to ~1,800 members of our Child Care Network in English and Spanish.

SERVE
 NECC offers customized resources and direct supports to meet the ongoing needs of child care providers and families with young children in Nebraska.

 **EHS-CCP**

Provided **279** children in **243** families with access to high-quality early learning and comprehensive support services through our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.

 **CDA Prep**

Distributed **\$24,000** in incentives to **48** child care provider graduates from our CDA prep course for earning or renewing their CDA certification.

 **TRAINING**

Opened our office training spaces to **46** community partners, who utilized the spaces for a collective **435** hours.

“Getting my CDA has opened up a lot of opportunities for myself. I was able to go from a Family Child Care Home I to a Family Child Care Home II, and that meant more income and having a more stable clientele.”

**LISSET CHRISTIAN,
 OWNER OF DIANA’S LEARNING CENTER**

2024 Financials

“When I started, we had a fund reserve of zero—we were living check to check. Today, we are financially stable, with a strong reserve, which is critical for sustainability.”

DWIGHT LANG,
CFO AT NECC

Revenues	
Contributions	\$5,739,660
Program Service Fees	\$855,474
In-Kind Donations	\$350,544
Grants & Contracts	\$6,122,015
\$13,067,693	

Expenses	
Program Services	\$10,302,001
Management & Fundraising	\$1,833,294
\$12,135,295	

Support Our Work



“Since getting licensed just over 2 years ago, I’ve accomplished getting my CDA, doubled my income, and have learned how to run a quality child care! (With A LOT of NECC’s help).”

TAYLOR FURNAS,
LICENSING TOOLKIT GRADUATE AND
OWNER OF TAYLOR’S TINY FRIENDS



Recognitions

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jesse Brickner
Finance-Administration Chair
- Patricia Carter
- Tina Cherica
- Charita J. Dailey, M.S.Ed.
- Nancy Edick, Ed.D.
- Christian Espinosa Torres
Board Chair
- Betty Harris
- Jacqueline Huscroft-D'Angelo,
Ph.D.
- Andrea Jahn, JD
- Dalhia Lloyd, Ph.D.
- AnnMarie Marlier
- Rick Putnam
Acting Secretary & Legal Counsel
- Dave Shrader

POLICY COUNCIL

- Ally Chavis
- Laura Croswell
- Rae'Van Gamble
Chair
- Tess Larson
- Nghia Le
- Regina Reyes

ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Lacey Ahrens
- Tammy Bando
- Jennifer Baumann
- Angela Blaes
- Erin Branch
- Cari Callan
- Kim Chase
- Jaclyn Duffy
- Erika Felt
- Dayna Hamel
- Shannon Hampson
- Kelly Hornbacher
- Denita Julius
- Megan King
- Sandra Kosierowski
- Heather Schmidt
- Pam Schmidt
- Kay Steinmeyer
- Shannon Stutzman
- Ann Marie Tentinger
- Anne Trouba
- Denicia Welch

Thank You To Our Funders & Supporters

- The Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation
- The Lozier Foundation
- The Olson Foundation
- The Omaha Zoo Foundation
- Baird Holm
- FNBO
- Union Pacific Foundation
- Security National Bank
- Civitas Strategies
- Constructive Playthings
- Lakeshore
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)-
UPLAN
- Jewish Community Foundation
- Wonderschool

INDIVIDUALS

- James Beckmann
- Dr. Jacqueline Huscroft-D'Angelo
- Matthew McCann
- Darren Osten
- Erin Owen
- Laraine Roberts

IN HONOR AND MEMORY

- Friends & Family of
Connie J. Finney (Shonka)

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 nebraskaeearly.org

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