

Communities for Kids Plus

2021 Evaluation Report | June 2021



Collaborate. Evaluate. Improve.

Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation

Communities for Kids Plus

2021 Evaluation Report

The Communities for Kids Plus (C4K+) project, administered by the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, utilizes community engagement and collective impact strategies to solve quality and capacity challenges in early childhood in communities across Nebraska. In 2020, federal funding under the auspices of the Preschool Development Grant enabled C4K+ to provide 31 communities with Quality and Capacity Building funding. Of these, 27 communities receive funding for an Early Childhood Community Coordinator, 18 receive additional dollars to support tuition assistance through Early Learning Scholarships, and 9 communities receive additional dollars to support child care providers whose first language is Spanish with training and materials in their primary language.

The C4K+ Annual Evaluation Report includes descriptive information and baseline data for the 27 communities participating in the Early Childhood Coordinator initiative plus the Early Learning Scholarships and training and support for bilingual providers.

Table of Contents

- C4K+ Overview**.....2
- Initiative Elements.....2
- C4K+ Communities2
- Early Childhood Community Coordinators**.....4
- Coordinator Characteristics4
- Coordinator Activities8
- Coordinator Feedback.....8
- Quality and Capacity Building**.....10
- Capacity12
- Quality.....12
- Early Learning Scholarships**.....13
- ELS Scholarship Funds Distributed13
- Spanish-Speaking Bilingual Support Initiative**14
- Conclusion and Next Steps**.....15



Communities for Kids
nebraskachildren



C4K+ OVERVIEW



Initiative Elements

The Communities for Kids initiative works together with communities—small and large, rural and urban, experienced and just beginning to organize—in order to enhance the early childhood landscape across Nebraska. The federal Preschool Development Grant is greatly boosting this work by infusing Nebraska communities with an array of resources aimed at increasing capacity and promoting quality in early childhood care—which is why the enhanced C4K initiative has been named Communities for Kids Plus (C4K+). The PDG funding is split into four pots:

- **Early Childhood Community Coordinators (ECCC) funding** - This is a paid, professional position in each community charged with developing a local collaborative infrastructure, aligning early care and education systems, and focusing on sustainable funding and activities.
- **Quality and Capacity Building (QCB) funding** - Quality and Capacity Building contracts support each community's unique needs and innovative ideas related to enhancing quality and/or increasing capacity of the current early childhood landscape. These project funds have been separated into five buckets including initiatives supporting a provider network, capital/operations, quality enhancement, community engagement, and innovation.
- **Early Learning Scholarships (ELS) funding** - Combined with private funds, the ELS opportunity supports tuition scholarships for over 100 children in Nebraska. Participating child care programs must meet the following criteria:
 1. Be enrolled in Step Up to Quality
 2. Demonstrate the characteristics of a high-quality program
 3. Track and report financial and evaluation criteria
 4. Serve low- and moderate-income families at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- **Spanish-Speaking Bilingual Provider Support Initiative (SSBPSI) funding** - Communities (or neighborhoods) with a 12% or higher population of Spanish-speaking residents are provided additional funds to support licensed and unlicensed providers. This initiative focuses on providers who are often unable to take advantage of resources due to the language barrier. As with other C4K+ initiatives, the intent is to increase quality and support child care licensing if applicable. In addition, the SSBPSI seeks to expand access to resources that are typically only offered in English to Spanish-speaking child care providers.

C4K+ Communities

The 27 communities that are supporting an Early Childhood Community Coordinator (ECCC) funded through the Preschool Development Grant are found across the state. The communities are evenly split by size with one third rural (population up to 7,500), one third mid-size (population 7,501 to 15,000) and one third having populations over 15,000 people.

C4K+ communities were selected through an extensive RFP process. Applicants included information about the community's demographics, including how many families meet federal guidelines for poverty. They conducted a needs assessment to document the number of licensed child care facilities in their community and the gap between available spaces and the number of young children needing care. The application included a job description for the Early Childhood Community Coordinator. Communities had wide latitude in setting the qualifications, salary, and hours so that the position could be tailored to the unique needs of each community. As a result, some coordinator positions are part-time while others are full-time.

Each community is utilizing a Collective Impact approach to bring together multiple stakeholders to improve the quality and availability of early childhood care. Communities are framing early childhood care as a key

element for economic development and essential for future growth and well-being. To combat attitudes that child care needs only impact young families, they are engaging leaders in the business community, local government, foundations, social service agencies, healthcare, K-12 education, and higher education. The hope is that building a strong coalition committed to improving the early childhood sector will lead to meaningful improvements that endure over time.

C4K+ Communities with Early Childhood Community Coordinator Contracts
Adams County (Hastings)
Atkinson/Holt County
Boone County (Albion)
Buffalo County (Kearney)
Burwell/Garfield County
Cherry County (Valentine)
Columbus & Schuyler (Platte & Colfax Counties)
Custer County Communities 4 Kids (Broken Bow)
Dodge County (Fremont)
Douglas County (Omaha)
Growing Community Connections/Jackson C4K (Dakota County)
Hall County Community Collaborative (Grand Island)
Lexington (Dawson County)
Lincoln (Lincoln Littles, Lancaster County)
Loup Valley Childhood Initiative (Ord)
Madison County (Norfolk)
McCook/Red Willow County
Nebraska City/Otoe County
North Platte Communities for Kids (Lincoln County)
Ogallala/Keith County
Panhandle Partnership (Garden County, Gering, Cheyenne County)
Stuart
Tecumseh Cares for Kids
Valley Child Development Center (Red Cloud)
Wilcox-Hildreth
Wood River
York

Evaluation Approach. The C4K+ evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative measures. In this first year of the initiative, coordinators took a survey assessing their strengths, motivations, and goals, participated in a focus group about their work, and prepared their community stakeholders to take the PARTNER survey, the social network analysis tool. The PARTNER will be administered in the summer of 2021 to measure the strengths of the collaboration across organizations to support early childhood initiatives. Each coordinator has an evaluator who provides guidance and answers questions about evaluation requirements. The evaluation is designed to give program staff ongoing feedback about the initiative and to help coordinators reflect on their work.



EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY COORDINATORS



The Early Childhood Community Coordinators (ECCC) support building quality and capacity by promoting a network of community leaders, stakeholders and providers focused on early childhood. The coordinator is seen as essential to the success of the C4K+ initiative, as their passion and expertise facilitate the collaboration necessary to achieve the community’s goals. The evaluation includes a review of coordinator characteristics, including professional background and leadership qualities, to identify commonalities and provide models of what communities might look for in filling the coordinator position.

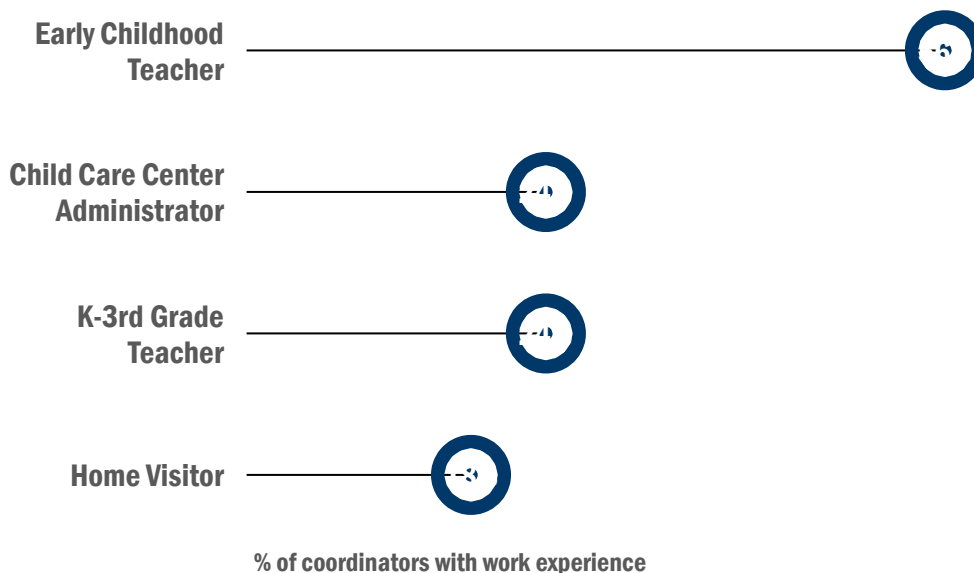
Coordinator Characteristics

As part of the evaluation, coordinators were asked to complete a survey about the experiences and skills they bring to their work and to reflect on their goals, as well as the challenges they foresee. While there are 27 communities in the C4K+ evaluation, two additional communities have early childhood coordinators who participate in coordinator network activities including the baseline survey. In addition, several communities, such as the Panhandle, have more than one coordinator. For these reasons, there were 34 respondents to the survey.

Most communities hired coordinators in the fall of 2020, while the rest were finalized in early spring of 2021. Four communities already had a coordinator who had been serving in this role for at least a year. In two communities the coordinator has been in place for over three years.

The majority (71%) of coordinators live in the community in which they work. Most (75%) have strong roots in their community, having lived there for five or more years. This will be helpful to building networks and collaborating across multiple sectors. Most (82%) have a background in early childhood and 41% report having worked for 10 or more years in the early childhood field. The following graph shows the various roles they previously held in early childhood.

The majority of coordinators with early childhood experience have worked directly with young children. n=28

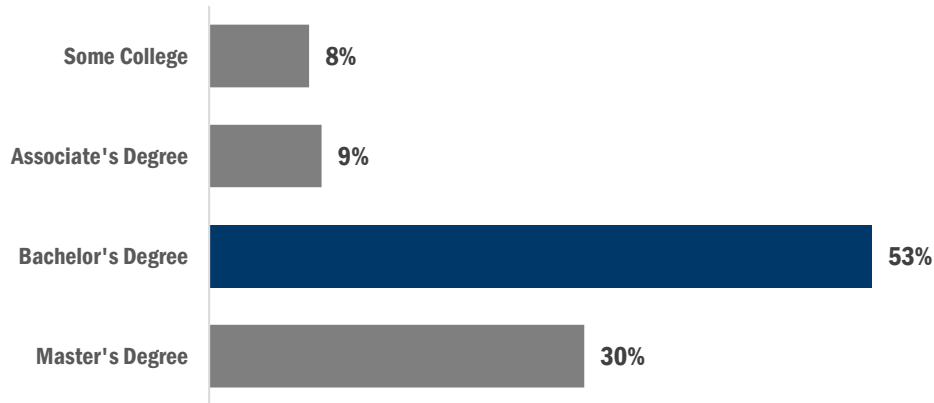


Other relevant work experiences include being an educational coach, an early childhood trainer, and a community college instructor in early childhood.

All of the coordinators report attending some college. Most (76%) majored in early childhood education or a related field, such as child development or psychology.

The majority of coordinators have a bachelor's degree.

n=34



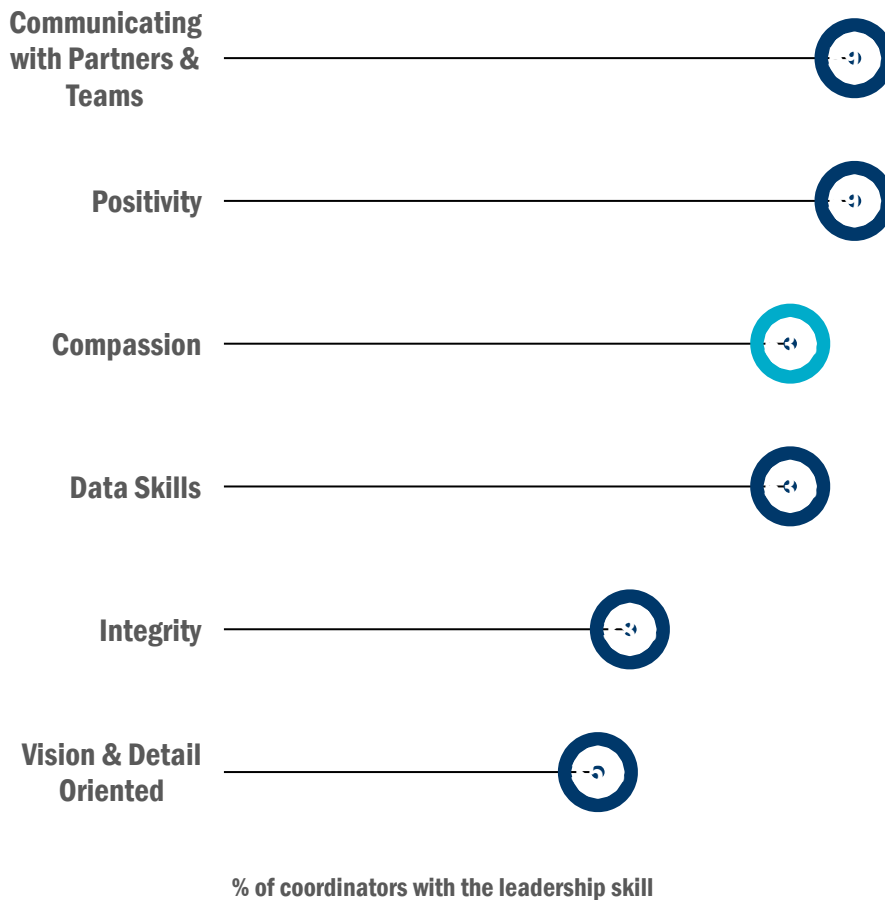
Coordinators reflected on the professional experiences they have had that they thought would be most relevant to their work. About a third (38%) of the coordinators have had project management experience and 50% have done project coordination. About a third (38%) have worked on community-wide initiatives. Not surprisingly, the coordinators value their work in early childhood above all other experiences. The following graph shows the top four professional experiences the coordinators anticipate will be most valuable.

Many coordinators have formal experience in communications. n=34



A core expectation for coordinators is to be leaders in their community. Coordinators reflected on their leadership qualities that will help them achieve the goals for their position. They noted the following as most important.

Over half of the coordinators find compassion to be an important leadership quality. n=34



Coordinators also identified being detail-oriented, valuing accountability, being inclusive of others, and being a self-starter as being important leadership qualities that they bring to this work.

Coordinator Goals. The top two reasons that drew people to the coordinator position were to promote quality early childhood education and to make a positive impact on their community. These speak to the commitment coordinators have to the early childhood field and their hope that each child can have a high-quality experience. It also demonstrates that coordinators see this work as larger than just promoting early childhood. They recognize that it impacts their community as a whole and will strengthen the community by making it a more vibrant place that can attract young families and build a better future.



As they start their work, coordinators emphasized that promoting quality child care by building relationships and strengthening partnerships across their communities is their top priority. This is the overarching framework that drives their goal setting. Several noted that educating the community about quality early childhood will be very important. As one coordinator explained, *“My goal is to educate the community on the need for high-quality early childhood care and education. I believe that there can be a large disjoint between young families with children and community members who are past the age of raising children and it’s my goal to help all community members see the value of young families and our children to our community, and therefore the importance of having many available high quality child care options!”*

Anticipated Challenges. Coordinators identified numerous challenges that lie ahead. About a quarter of the coordinators are most concerned about getting a strong cross-section of their community engaged with the work. They noted that getting people on board and ready to embrace change can be difficult. They want to bring the business community to the table and engage others whose perspectives and voices may not have been included in the past. Launching C4K+ during the COVID-19 pandemic posed additional challenges. Several coordinators noted that meeting by teleconferencing was a poor substitute for face-to-face gatherings. The success of their work will depend on strong relationships. Building those relationships across a computer screen was daunting at times.

Another challenge some coordinators noted was their lack of experience in early childhood or their lack of long-time connections to the community. They recognize that they face a steep learning curve, and they will

“
Early childhood development is so critical. I see the benefits daily when we are supporting kids right away. I want to bring that to my hometown.

- A coordinator reflects

”
want to connect with early childhood leaders so they can deepen their understanding of what is needed to improve the sector. A few coordinators noted that juggling so many priorities and initiatives (e.g. building a community child care center while also increasing the quality of existing centers) will be difficult. One coordinator described the challenge of *“managing all the moving arms that comes with this position!”* A final area of concern that stood out was the lack of funding available in the community to strengthen child care centers and the challenge of increasing quality when there is a limited pool of trained early childhood professionals.



Coordinator Activities

The Early Childhood Community Coordinators serve as the nexus of early childhood initiatives in their communities. As part of their duties, they identify partners across multiple sectors and engage a variety of stakeholders to provide leadership to early childhood efforts. They may develop, coordinate, and implement public awareness activities to help the community understand the importance of high-quality early childhood care to the children, families and communities they serve. They track access and quality of care in their community and may sponsor trainings that will increase quality and help providers meet licensure requirements. For communities with multiple initiatives such as Sixpence, Ready Rosie, or Rooted in Relationships, the coordinator brings program leaders together to maximize the impact of everyone's work by collaborating and sharing resources. While many coordinator activities are similar across communities, each coordinator is autonomous and will implement strategies that are customized to meet local needs.

The C4K+ program administrators have worked diligently to support the coordinators in a variety of ways. Each coordinator has a Technical Assistant (T.A.) from NCFE who meets regularly with the ECCC.

Technical assistance is customized for each coordinator, and may include grant writing support, help with completing a work plan, or simply being a sympathetic listener with whom the coordinator can process an issue in their work. The T.A.'s have expertise in early childhood, community building, and implementing change in sustainable ways.

Coordinators participate in bi-monthly meetings that focus on sharing resources, building connections across communities, and providing additional professional development activities with Mission Matters, a Nebraska-based consulting firm. Sample activities include a prompt to spark discussion or reflection, such as, "What has been the most helpful thing you have learned from a fellow coordinator?" There may be a brief presentation by other early childhood leaders, a tour of an online resource such as the Nebraska Child Care Referral Network, or a breakout session for small groups to collaborate on writing their community work plans. Building relationships across communities has been a significant benefit of these meetings. The T.A.'s are active participants in the meeting and may lead breakout sessions for the coordinators they support.

The C4K+ program team recognizes that creating a space for coordinators to connect and learn from each other will enhance the alignment of goals and provide authentic support. For most coordinators, there is no one else in their community who has ever done the kind of work they are trying to do.

Coordinator Feedback

In March 2021, 21 ECCC's participated in focus groups with the evaluation team at MMI/UNMC. The purpose of the focus groups was to assess the strength of the onboarding and orientation process to the position, what supports they draw upon in their work, and the challenges they've encountered so far. Results from these focus groups were aggregated and four themes were identified: job orientation, networking and collaboration, work challenges, and work satisfaction. Each of these themes will be discussed in greater detail below.

Job Orientation. When asked about the orientation they had received when they began their coordinator position, participants in all eight focus groups noted no official orientation. They recalled individuals' stories of learning things independently and meeting with their Technical Assistant (T.A.) to learn more. Participants

“

To educate community members on the importance of early childhood education. If no one understands why we do what we do, it will not be as effective.

- A coordinator shares her goal

”



expressed the struggle and stress they had when they first started. One coordinator noted, *“I didn't have any orientation for this position, I was the one in charge of C4K. Before it was the C4K plus. And so, I just kind of got thrown into this role.”*

Almost all focus group participants spoke extensively about the support they got from their T.A. Many of the respondents seem to have a great working relationship with their T.A. One of the participants stated: *“Our T.A. is instrumental in what we're doing... She right away let me know she was there but wasn't overwhelming. She gives me what I need to know. And if I want to know more, I know she's just an email away. If I email her, I have a response in no time if I need to set up a zoom or something with her. She's very flexible and making sure that it's in a timely manner and that she's giving me the feedback that I need.”*

Networking and Collaboration. Working with other initiatives has influenced the social climate within the early childhood community. For example, some participants described their collaboration with Rooted in Relationships, Sixpence, and other organizations. It was evident that to best serve in the position of ECCC, working with others and early childhood key stakeholders was the key to success for them. Many of the participants expressed a will to build a relationship with providers when they first started. They stated that they increased their understanding to collaborate.

Work Challenges. When asked what has been the most challenging of their work over the last three months, participants experienced difficulties bringing providers to the table. As one ECCC noted: *“I would say for me is like engagement. You have people who say that they're excited, they're gonna do something, and then they don't.”* Some respondents articulated finding the balance of supporting and connecting with providers without being an intruder, while others experienced more technical challenges such as getting contracts signed and writing budget justifications.

Environmental and logistic issues were another challenge. Not being able to meet in-person for training or for networking, has been frustrating. Finding a time for in-home providers to participate has been difficult. They are home all day long with children and cannot participate in meetings or trainings during the work day. High COVID-19 numbers at times prevented in-person meetings. Not surprisingly, the Nebraska winter weather also disrupted well-laid plans. As one provider noted, she *“had a couple of trainings set up finally, when the COVID-19 numbers had gone down, and then we got an insane amount of snow. So, we still couldn't get together.”*

Work Satisfaction. Despite many coordinators not being in their position for long, many respondents felt they had accomplished a lot, such as connecting and networking with providers and the community, providing early learning scholarships, and identifying providers caring for Spanish-speaking children. All participants talked about what they like about the work they are doing:

- *“For me, it's the relationships and working with the groups...”*
- *“I mean, for me, it's the difference that it's hopefully going to make in the community.”*
- *“[This community] is in desperate need. So hopefully the continued positive difference and change that it's going to make, will be rewarding.”*

QUALITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING



The Quality and Capacity Building Initiative provides funding to communities to increase child care quality and/or increase the number of child care slots available in their community. Funds can be used for five different activities: provider network, capital/operations, quality enhancement, community engagement, and innovation. Thirty-one communities are receiving funds to improve child care quality and increase child care capacity.

Quality

While there are many measures of quality, in this context quality child care is identified by enrollment in Step Up to Quality (SUTQ), which is Nebraska's quality rating and improvement system. Baseline information on the number of providers enrolled in SUTQ in each community and SUTQ ratings were collected in October 2020, highlighted in the table below. Overall, 18% of programs are participating in Step Up to Quality. The majority of programs have ratings in the 1-3 range.

Community Name	Number (and percent) of providers participating in Step Up to Quality	% of providers with a SUTQ rating of 1 - 3	% providers with a SUTQ rating of 4 - 5
<i>Adams County*</i>	7 (16.7%)	57.1%	42.9%
<i>Atkinson/Holt County</i>	--	--	--
<i>Boone County*</i>	3 (20.0%)	100.0%	--
<i>Buffalo County*</i>	20 (20.4%)	65.0%	35.0%
<i>Burwell/Garfield County (Sandhills Coalition)*</i>	--	--	--
<i>Cherry County (Valentine)*</i>	3 (23.1%)	100.0%	--
<i>Columbus (Platte)</i>	4 (6.7%)	100.0%	--
<i>Schuyler (Colfax)</i>	--	--	--
<i>Custer County Communities 4 Kids (Sandhills)*</i>	3 (14.3%)	66.7%	33.3%
<i>Dodge County*</i>	9 (20.0%)	77.8%	22.2%
<i>Douglas County*</i>	115 (16.1%)	89.6%	10.4%
<i>Garden County (Panhandle)*</i>	1 (50.0%)	100.0%	--
<i>Gering (Panhandle)</i>	2 (16.7%)	100.0%	--
<i>Gothenburg (Dawson County)</i>	2 (22.2%)	100.0%	--
<i>Growing Community Connections (Dakota)*</i>	3 (10.0%)	100.0%	--
<i>Hall County Community Collaborative</i>	6 (7.1%)	66.7%	33.3%
<i>Lexington (Dawson County)</i>	4 (23.5%)	100.0%	--
<i>Lincoln, City of (Lancaster)</i>	86 (22.6%)	89.5%	10.5%
<i>Loup Valley Childhood Initiative (Sandhills) (Ord/Valley Co)*</i>	3 (25.0%)	66.7%	33.3%
<i>Madison County (Norfolk)*</i>	15 (20.5%)	73.3%	26.7%
<i>McCook/Red Willow County*</i>	1 (4.8%)	100.0%	--
<i>Nebraska City/Otoe County*</i>	2 (6.7%)	100.0%	--
<i>North Platte Communities 4 Kids</i>	6 (17.6%)	83.3%	16.7%
<i>Ogallala/Keith County*</i>	1 (7.7%)	100.0%	--
<i>Panhandle Partnership** (less City of Gering, Garden and Cheyenne Counties)</i>	32 (35.2%)	75.0%	25.0%



Pender	1 (33.3%)	100.0%	--
Stuart	--	--	--
Tecumseh Tomorrows	--	--	--
The Valley Child Development Center (Red Cloud)	1 (50.0%)	100.0%	--
Wilcox-Hildreth	--	--	--
Wood River (Hall)	--	--	--
York*	8 (29.6%)	87.5%	12.5%
Total	338 (18.0%)	84.9%	15.1%

*County wide numbers

**Regional Numbers (9 of 11 Panhandle Counties)

Coordinators describe their goals:

“To educate community members on the importance of early childhood development and education. If no one understands why we do what we do, it will not be as effective.”

“To make sure that no child is turned away from learning opportunities.”

“To facilitate high-quality early childhood experiences and partnerships within our community and state.”

“To listen and hear the needs of our community and implement a strategy that has a lasting and positive impact.”



Capacity Building

Capacity building is measured by the number of child care programs available in each community. Baseline information on child care programs was collected in October 2020, highlighted in the table below. Overall, there are 1,878 child care programs available in the 31 communities participating in the Quality and Capacity Building initiative. Over two-thirds are family child care homes, and one-third are center-based.

Community Name	Total # of Programs	% Family Childcare Homes	% Center Based (including preK)
<i>Adams County*</i>	42	71.4%	28.6%
<i>Atkinson/Holt County</i>	8	100.0%	--
<i>Boone County*</i>	15	100.0%	--
<i>Buffalo County*</i>	98	73.5%	26.5%
<i>Burwell/Garfield County (Sandhills Coalition)*</i>	5	60.0%	40.0%
<i>Cherry County (Valentine)*</i>	13	92.3%	7.7%
<i>Columbus (Platte)</i>	60	71.7%	28.3%
<i>Schuyler (Colfax)</i>	7	85.7%	14.3%
<i>Custer County Communities 4 Kids (Sandhills)*</i>	21	71.4%	28.6%
<i>Dodge County*</i>	45	57.8%	42.2%
<i>Douglas County*</i>	714	61.5%	38.5%
<i>Garden County (Panhandle)*</i>	2	--	100.0%
<i>Gering (Panhandle)</i>	12	66.7%	33.3%
<i>Gothenburg (Dawson County)</i>	9	33.3%	66.7%
<i>Growing Community Connections (Dakota)*</i>	30	83.3%	16.7%
<i>Hall County Community Collaborative</i>	85	80.0%	20.0%
<i>Lexington (Dawson County)</i>	17	82.4%	17.6%
<i>Lincoln, City of (Lancaster)</i>	381	67.2%	32.8%
<i>Loup Valley Childhood Initiative (Sandhills) (Ord/Valley Co)*</i>	12	91.7%	8.3%
<i>Madison County (Norfolk)*</i>	73	76.7%	23.3%
<i>McCook/Red Willow County*</i>	21	61.9%	38.1%
<i>Nebraska City/Otoe County*</i>	30	80.0%	20.0%
<i>North Platte Communities 4 Kids</i>	34	50.0%	50.0%
<i>Ogallala/Keith County*</i>	13	84.6%	15.4%
<i>Panhandle Partnership** (less City of Gering, Garden and Cheyenne Counties)</i>	91	67.0%	33.0%
<i>Pender</i>	3	66.7%	33.3%
<i>Stuart</i>	3	100.0%	--
<i>Tecumseh Tomorrows</i>	4	50.0%	50.0%
<i>The Valley Child Development Center (Red Cloud)</i>	2	50.0%	50.0%
<i>Wilcox-Hildreth</i>	--	--	--
<i>Wood River (Hall)</i>	1	100.0%	--
<i>York*</i>	27	63.0%	37.0%
Total	1878	67.2%	32.8%

*County wide numbers

**Regional Numbers (9 of 11 Panhandle Counties)



EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS



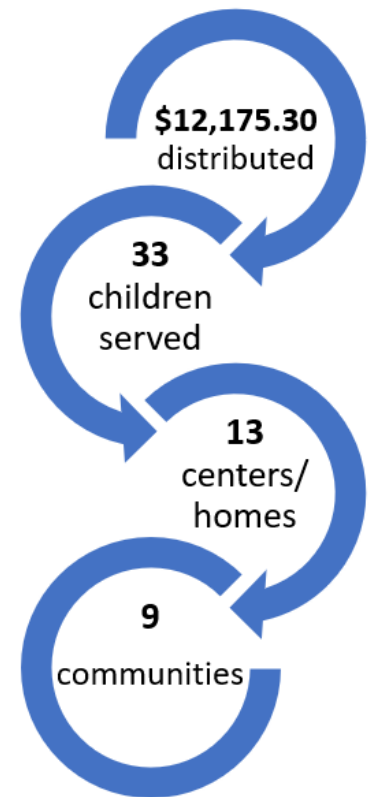
The Early Learning Scholarships program is intended to support working families in meeting the high cost of quality care for children 6 weeks – 6 years in full day/year-round settings (not attending kindergarten) or attending the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (e.g., wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool).

Support includes increasing access to high-quality care for young children in low and moderate earning families in Nebraska. Funding is being made available through communities to early childhood providers engaged in delivery of quality early learning environments and experiences for young children. Tuition assistance is available to families whose income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines based on family size.

ELS Scholarship Funds Distributed

Eighteen communities are participating in the Early Learning Scholarships initiative:

- Adams County
- Buffalo County
- Columbus and Schuyler
- Custer County Communities 4 Kids
- Dodge County
- Douglas County
- Growing Community Connections (Dakota County)
- Hall County Community Collaborative
- Lexington (Dawson County)
- Lincoln (Lancaster County)
- Madison County
- Nebraska City/Otoe County
- North Platte Communities 4 Kids
- Ogallala/Keith County
- Pender
- Tecumseh Tomorrows
- The Valley Child Development Center (Red Cloud)
- Wood River



Distribution of scholarship funds began in March 2021. A total of \$12,175.30 in scholarship money was distributed in March and April 2021, serving 33 children. The average scholarship amount was \$380 per child.



SPANISH-SPEAKING BILINGUAL PROVIDER SUPPORT INITIATIVE



The Spanish-Speaking Bilingual Provider Support Initiative (SSBPSI) offers communities with a high Spanish-speaking population the opportunity to improve access to early childhood professional development and quality improvement activities for Spanish-speaking bilingual child care providers (which may include licensed, licensed exempt, family, friends, and neighbors) serving children ages 0 to 5.

There are 9 communities participating in the bilingual child care support initiative: Adams County, Columbus and Schuyler (Platte/Colfax counties), Dodge County, Douglas County, Growing Community Connections in Dakota County, Hall County Community Collaborative, Lexington (Dawson County), McCook/Red Willow County, and Panhandle Partnership. These communities have identified several activities they plan to undertake to promote the Bilingual Child Care Support Initiative, including:

- Making personal contact with Spanish-speaking providers to identify their needs
- Determine interest in becoming licensed
- Develop and conduct monthly Spanish-speaking childcare provider network, support, and education group
- Offer Spanish language trainings to licensed and unlicensed providers
- Help Spanish-speaking providers obtain child care licensing
- Provide coaching and assistance enrolling in SUTQ
- Work with Spanish-speaking providers to offer ELS
- Help Spanish-speaking families find child care
- Provide Spanish language classes for providers working with Spanish-speaking children
- Hire bilingual navigator, and TA coach
- Recruit Spanish-speaking providers to participate in CDA program
- Utilize translators and translating devices to translate communications into Spanish
- Partner with Migrant Head Start, Title 1C, school districts, and other service providers to reach Spanish-speaking population



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



In the first year of the C4K+, 27 communities across Nebraska are supporting an Early Childhood Community Coordinator to increase the quality and availability of early childhood care. The coordinators are building new partnerships and using a collective impact approach to make lasting change in the early childhood landscape in their communities. The Early Learning Scholarships and Spanish-Speaking Bilingual Support Initiative have been launched and are in the early stages of implementation.

In the 2021-2022 program year, ten communities will be added using the traditional C4K model of engagement. The program team will provide ongoing support to the coordinators, including the bi-monthly meetings, trainings and resources. They will also track the increase in quality and capacity of child care in each C4K+ community. They will expand on the ELS work.

In the second year of the initiative, the evaluation will include the results of the PARTNER tool to map the strengths of the social networks in each community. A visual map will be created for each community that will show how well partner organizations are connected to each other.

Starting in June, 2021, coordinators will log their activities that build partnerships, connect diverse stakeholders, and raise community awareness of the importance of early childhood to the community's well-being. They will track their work by type of activity (e.g. training, group meeting, community event), purpose of the activity and their perception of its effectiveness. The logs are an online tool that can be completed quickly and will provide a running record for the coordinator to track their work.



“As a young family new to the small community, I appreciated the opportunity to get involved right away and meet people. Bringing additional high-quality childcare services to the community will help our small community continue to grow and thrive.”

A coordinator reflects on quality child care



MUNROE-MEYER
INSTITUTE

Evaluation Report prepared by
Amanda Prokasky, Ph.D., Rosie Zweiback, M.A., & Drissa Toure, Ph.D.
Interdisciplinary Center of Program Evaluation
The University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute:
A University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities

