

You are receiving this email because of your interest in early child care work in Nebraska.

NEBRASKA PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT



Quarterly Newsletter - October 2019

Nebraska's vision is for families to have strong early childhood options to choose among, supported by strong community leadership and well-aligned state system.

Nebraska's goal in the Preschool Development Grant - aligning state systems to equip local communities to deliver services, resulting in parents and families choosing options that support their child's healthy development - requires that the needs assessment address not only state-level data and infrastructure but also local and regional data.

To accomplish this, grant-funded activities include projects to support:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Statewide Strategic Plan
3. Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge
4. Sharing Best Practices to Strengthen the Early Childhood Workforce
5. Improving the Overall Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education

View updates from these projects below:

Strategic Plan Update

by Amy Mart, Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Seventy-two stakeholders from across the state participated in Strategic Planning Advisory Team (SPAT) meetings in Bridgeport, Kearney, and Lincoln on August 6-8. Participants reviewed preliminary findings from the family and provider surveys, responded to a series of discussion questions, and provided feedback on next steps for the needs assessment and strategic plan. The next round of SPAT meetings will be held on the afternoons of October 23 (Bridgeport), 24 (Kearney), and 25 (Omaha). Please mark your calendars and watch for a more detailed invitation.

On August 16, Nebraska's Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) approved a motion to create a taskforce to guide the development of the PDG strategic plan. This group includes representation from the ECICC and PDG management team, and will begin meeting on October 10th. After reviewing and providing feedback on the strategic plan, the task force will make recommendations the ECICC chairperson, who will approve the plan before it is formally submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Needs Assessment Update

by Amy Mart, Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Data collection for the PDG needs assessment is nearly complete. We heard from over 3541 families through the "Focus on Nebraska Families" survey and over 1337 early childhood providers through our "Early Childhood Program and Leadership Survey" survey. The team at Buffett Early Childhood (BECI) Institute is analyzing data from these surveys to answer key questions about several key themes for the needs assessment, including: availability, access, and quality of early care and education across the state; parent engagement and choice; transition to kindergarten; and coordination of care and services throughout the system. Focus groups with families across the state, including several targeted populations (e.g. Latino migrant families, Native American families, African American families) are also yielding valuable data that will complement the survey results and allow for a deeper understanding of families' experiences. These efforts have helped to ensure that our findings will reflect the diversity of Nebraska's communities and the full range of ECCE settings.

Two additional surveys will be administered online this month. A survey of early childhood professionals who work directly with children and families, birth through age 5, will elevate the voices of the early childhood workforce. If you have not done so already, ***please share the online survey link with your networks:*** https://unleducation.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4T8MMHtZYjlvUx. All who complete the survey will be entered for a chance to win a \$100 gift card.

Finally, an online key informant survey will provide an opportunity for early childhood leaders across the state to share their perspectives on the strengths, barriers, and opportunities in Nebraska's ECCE system. Please watch your inbox for a link to this survey very soon!

All of these findings will be synthesized in the PDG Needs Assessment report, which will be submitted at the end of October.

Federal grant will make revised parenting resource available to families with young children statewide



by Michael Medwick, *First Five Nebraska*

Planning for and guiding the early development of young children can be hard—even overwhelming—for many parents. This is particularly true for families with limited resources, or for parents taking on this important role for the first time. We need to think strategically about how we can make it easier for parents to understand children’s developmental needs and navigate through the sometimes daunting array of services and supports available to them.

This is the thinking behind *Learning Begins at Birth*, a forthcoming resource guide that will be made available later this year to new and expectant parents statewide as part of Nebraska’s Federal Preschool Development Grant. The resource is being produced by a multi-organizational work group representing Nebraska Extension, the Nebraska Young Child Institute, Nebraska Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, First Five Nebraska, and other partners.

[Read the full article here.](#)

News from the Administration for Children and Families

by Nicole Vint, *Children and Family Services (Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services)*

No-Cost Extension

The NDHHS received formal notification about the possibility of a No-Cost Extension for the 2019 PDG B-5 award to Nebraska. At the Nebraska Leadership Team Meeting on September 24, it was confirmed that Nebraska will apply for a two-month extension. This will make it possible to continue work through February 29. The extra time will allow all of the activities to be as comprehensive as possible and assure alignment of programs within the Strategic Plan.

Renewal Grant Application

In addition to the No-Cost Extension, an expected Funding Opportunity Announcement was made for a PDG B-5

NAESP Leadership Academy

by Melody Hobson, *Office of Early Childhood Education (Nebraska Department of Education)*

Through Preschool Development Grant B-5 funding, supplemented by dollars from the Nebraska Department of Education, 20 early childhood administrators will participate in Nebraska’s first ever, **NAESP Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy**. The Academy was established by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and is a blended professional learning experience with in-person training sessions, online coursework, communities of practice, and virtual support from experienced and knowledgeable advisors. Participants also design and implement a Capstone Project to apply what they have learned to current issues in their school or community. Nebraska’s participants hail from all parts of the state. The administrators work in schools from rural districts, moderately sized communities and the metro area. A learning facilitator from NAESP leads the in-person sessions. Additional support is provided by Kristine Luebke from the Office of Early Childhood Education at the Nebraska Department of Education.

Renewal Grant. If awarded, the grant would provide resources to implement core strategies of the Nebraska Strategic Plan. Nebraska may apply for up to \$10 million in funding each year, over a three-year period. The grant application process is competitive. There are currently 45 states that have 2019 PDG awards and are eligible to apply and roughly half of those will be awarded. A grant writing team has begun work on the application process, with a due date of November 5th. All stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the Strategic Plan Advisory Meetings in October as those sessions will help inform priorities for implementation.



Administration Days Presentation

by Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood Education (Nebraska Department of Education)

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) hosted **Agents of Change for Equity: A Virtual Conference Experience**, on Wednesday, July 31. As a part of this conference, the Nebraska Head Start Collaboration Office led a session on creating transition agreements. Using the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as a framework to plan high-quality transition practices, a diverse panel of early childhood practitioners discussed strategies to meet requirements and ensure smooth transitions for young children as they take

Coach Infrastructure

by Lynne Brehm, Rooted in Relationships (Nebraska Children and Families Foundation) and Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood Education (Nebraska Department of Education)

“Coaching is an evidence-based adult learning strategy used for interacting with parents and other care providers to recognize what they are already doing that works to support child learning and development as well as building upon existing or new ideas” (Sheldon and Rush 2008).

Ongoing collaboration has been occurring for many years to align existing coaching systems so that early childhood (EC) programs receive streamlined services, financial resources are used efficiently, and coaches maintain a high degree of skill.

[Read the full article here](#)

that important step of entering kindergarten.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Learn More About PDG

Please forward this email to others who may be interested in learning more about Nebraska's Preschool Development Grant work.

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 publication was made possible by 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.

Our Contact Information

Nebraska Children & Families Foundation

215 Centennial Mall South

Suite 200

Lincoln, NE 68508

402-476-9401

www.NebraskaChildren.org

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