



Nebraska Association for the  
Education of Young Children

# 2021-2022 Annual Report





On behalf of the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. (Nebraska AEYC) staff and Board of Directors, we would like to welcome you to the 2021-2022 Nebraska AEYC Annual Report.

Since 1976, Nebraska AEYC has been dedicated to strengthening and supporting Nebraska’s early childhood community. Over the years, our projects and services have worked to improve early childhood education programs and the early childhood education workforce, through education, leadership, and advocacy. And, with the addition of Circle of Security Parenting and Circle of Security Classroom, we have expanded our opportunities to include parent education and support. We are honored to partner with others to bring all of these programs to communities across Nebraska.

Our projects and services exemplify our mission driven work and supports our belief that early childhood educators must be valued, respected, and well compensated for the essential and important roles they play in support of children, families, and our economy. We also believe that ALL children should have access to high quality early childhood experiences, whether in their homes or in early childhood education settings.

We are very proud of the work we do and we remain committed to providing opportunities that promote excellence for early childhood educators, children, and families. Please take a few minutes to read about all of our projects in this report.

**Chantel Tonkinson, Board President**

**Tracy Gordon, Executive Director**

## [ Vision Statement ]

Nebraska AEYC envisions a state where all of Nebraska’s children, families, and educators have access to high quality opportunities that support positive, lasting outcomes.

## [ Mission Statement ]

Nebraska AEYC provides opportunities that promote excellence in early childhood for Nebraska’s educators, children, and families, through education, advocacy, and leadership.



### **Nebraska AEYC Staff**

*(In order from left to right):*

- Alex Scheuler, Administrative Assistant
- Julie Warford, T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$® Counselor
- Jill Snyder, Project Coordinator
- Tracy Gordon, Executive Director
- Amanda Ross-Hoffer, Financial Bookkeeper
- Sarah Lowe, Circle of Security Project Coordinator
- Jennifer Durow, Finance Manager

# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program awards educational scholarships to early education professionals in an effort to address the key issues of undereducation, poor compensation, and high turnover in the early education workforce. All T.E.A.C.H. scholarships link increased education with higher compensation and retention. With a 91% (for associate degree) and a 97% (for bachelor's degree) retention rate, Nebraska's T.E.A.C.H. recipients show dramatic dedication to remaining in their professions with turnover rates that are far less than the national turnover rates of 30-40%. This year alone, 8,325 of Nebraska's children benefitted from consistent early education and care provided by better prepared early childhood educators.



## 2021-2022 funding for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA provided by:

Nebraska Department of Education  
Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services

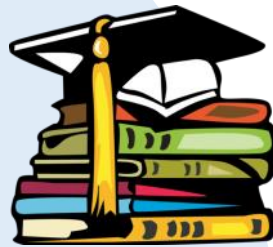
**164 Scholarship Recipients**  
**Completed 1,389 Credits**

## 8 Community Colleges

Central	Western NE
Metropolitan	Little Priest Tribal
Southeast	Nebraska Indian
Mid-Plains	Northeast

## 5 Universities

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
University of Nebraska-Kearney  
Chadron State College  
Peru State College  
Wayne State College



## Student/Program Demographics

- ◇ Average recipient is 33 years old
- ◇ 43% of recipients have no other college graduates in their family
- ◇ Positions
  - ◇ 10 Directors, 127 Teachers, 27 Family Child Care Providers
- ◇ 116 different sponsoring programs

*"T.E.A.C.H. has and continues to change my life, improve my skills, and motivate me to be the best teacher I can be. I am forever thankful."*

*~A 2021-2022 T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient*

## 2021-2022 Outcomes

Education	Associate Degree Students	Bachelor's Degree Students
Total Recipients	109	55
Graduates	8	5
Avg. GPA	3.27	3.56
Avg. Credits Per Contract	16.4	19.3
Retention		
Completed Commitment	91.1%	96.9%
Compensation		
Avg. Increase In Salary	8.54%	6.7%

## T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Advisory Committee

Lori Altmaier	Heather Schmidt
Lisa Brestel	Cathy Stockwell
Tammy Classen	Paula Thompson
M. Jane Franklin	Shelley Wallace
Diane Lewis	Nicole Vint
Brandy Price	Beckie Cromer
Cheryl Roche	

## T.E.A.C.H. Scholar Annual Survey:

- ⇒ 99% of survey respondents would recommend T.E.A.C.H. to other child care providers.
- ⇒ 86% of survey respondents will continue using a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship in the coming year.
- ⇒ 100% are satisfied/very satisfied with the T.E.A.C.H. program.

## T.E.A.C.H. Sponsoring Program Annual Survey:

- ⇒ 97% would recommend T.E.A.C.H. to other child care programs.
- ⇒ 87% of sponsoring programs will continue to sponsor a T.E.A.C.H. scholar in the coming year.
- ⇒ 95% of survey respondents are satisfied/very satisfied with the T.E.A.C.H. program.

# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA

## Voice from the Field

Shelley Wallace never imagined being a family child care provider. Even as a small child, she knew she wanted to be a teacher, but she always believed she would be an art teacher, not an early childhood educator. Her aunt, who she idolized, had her doctorate in education and was a principal at a local school. She started college with the intention of being like her aunt, but life got in the way, and she settled for an Associate Degree in Accounting, instead. However, Shelley promised herself that someday she would get her bachelor's degree.

At the time of graduation, her son was struggling developmentally and she decided to take a year to homeschool him, so she could help him catch up. During this time, Shelly also began operating a family child care business to provide for her family. Shelley believed that after a year, she would find a job in accounting and go back to college part-time. What she didn't know, was she was going to find her life's passion.

Shelley currently runs the only NAFCC accredited family child care program in Nebraska, has a certified Nature Explore classroom, and was the first Wonderschool in Nebraska. Even though she had been doing family child care for 20 years, she still ached to have her bachelor's degree and teaching certificate. She heard about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nebraska and, after receiving the scholarship, enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Inclusive degree program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. She now also serves on the T.E.A.C.H. & WAGE\$ Advisory Committee because she wants to help other providers achieve their dreams as well.

Shelley worried about student teaching. She knew she could never leave her assistant on his own with seven children. However, she needed to care for a minimum of seven children to meet her financial needs. Receiving a WAGE\$ supplement has enabled her to financially cut back to five children while completing her student teaching requirement.

Shelley Wallace said, "I am looking forward to having my teaching certificate and fulfilling my lifelong dream of being a certified teacher, all because of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$." Shelley Wallace graduated at the end of the Fall 2021 term with her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Shelley is now using her WAGE\$ stipends to get her master's degree and doctorate in early childhood education. She also wants to continue her family child care program until she is ready to retire. Shelley said, "I believe the best place for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers is with family. That is what family child care is all about, and because of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$, I can continue to provide that care and education until I retire."



**For more information about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA:**  
**teach@NebraskaAEYC.org - 402-858-5143 (Lincoln) - www.NebraskaAEYC.org**

*All credits converted to semester credit hours. Data taken from 2021-2022 Annual Report to the T.E.A.C.H. National Center. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association.*

# Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA

## Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA

Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA is a program that provides education-based salary supplements (sometimes called stipends) to low-paid early care and education providers working with children ages birth to five in licensed family child care settings in Nebraska. WAGE\$ impacts early childhood education programs and educators by recognizing and rewarding dedicated professionals, stabilizing the early childhood workforce, and encouraging continued education.



### Personal Impact

- ◆ In 2021-2022, 34 child care professionals earned salary supplements.
- ◆ 245 Nebraska children benefited from consistent care provided by a WAGE\$ participant.

### Education

- ◆ 74% of participants had an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher OR submitted education documentation to show progress in college.

### Compensation

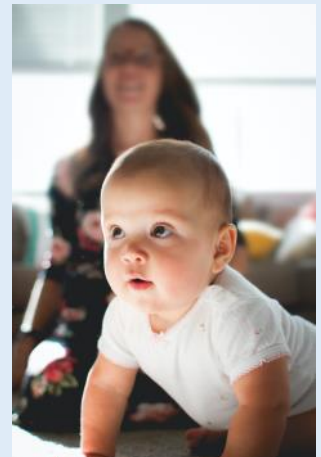
- ◆ 88% of WAGE\$ participants earned less than \$15 per hour.
- ◆ Recipients earned an average six-month supplement of \$1,067.

### Retention

- ◆ 97% of WAGE\$ participants stayed in their early education programs.

### Demographics

- ◆ 6% of participants were people of color.
- ◆ 100% of participants were women.



*"The WAGE\$ program encourages individuals to better themselves through education. The program did just that for me. The children in my care are benefitting from the result of my education. They are being taught because I was 'taught'."*

*~A 2021-2022 WAGE\$ Recipient*

**For more information about Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA:  
wages@NebraskaAEYC.org 402-858-5143 (Lincoln) www.NebraskaAEYC.org**

*Data taken from 2021-2022 Annual Report to the T.E.A.C.H. National Center.  
Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association.*

# Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA

## Voice from the Field

### Denita Julius

"I have been in the business of caregiving since I was 16 years old and became a CNA. When my daughter was born, I went from working in nursing homes to private care and in 2004, I decided to switch my field of caregiving to child care. When I started my in-home program, I did not realize all that was entailed in early childhood. I thought of myself as a person who got to stay home, watch kids, and provide them with activities while providing them with a safe and nurturing environment. It did not take long before I was attending every training I could find time for, and striving to continually improve myself, so that I could provide the best quality of care that I could.



In the summer of 2013, I decided to work towards achieving my associate degree. Part of this decision was as a backup plan because so many changes were happening and all of these rules about having to have health care were going on. This worried me that I might not be able to survive as a family child care provider. I graduated in 2016 with my Associate Degree in Human Services and I wanted to keep working towards my bachelor's degree. However, knowing that the classes were going to cost more, and I was going to have to complete practicum hours in other programs while I hand my program over to someone else, made me give up and be satisfied with my associate degree. For some reason, I had heard of T.E.A.C.H., but never looked into it.

Fast forward to today, and I have graduated from Chadron State College with my bachelor's degree, received my CDA in August of 2018, I am enrolled with SUTQ and have been a Step 5 since 2019, and I am part of Six-pence Sprouting Success. I took that step of looking into T.E.A.C.H. and found out what I had missed out on before, and now it has helped make completing my education possible.

I have had the pleasure of working with multiple organizations that view ECE as one of the most important foundations of development, just as I do. I take these classes and improve for myself and my children, but the day I got the letter in the mail about Child Care WAGE\$® was definitely like a pat on the back and a thank you for what many of us are doing in this field.

We have worked hard for recognition and understanding for what we do, and we put a lot of time and effort in expanding. An incentive like Child Care WAGE\$® was like the cherry on top to what I was already doing."

**For more information about Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA:  
wages@NebraskaAEYC.org 402-858-5143 (Lincoln) www.NebraskaAEYC.org**

*Data taken from 2021-2022 Annual Report to the T.E.A.C.H. National Center.  
Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association.*

# Rooted in Relationships/Pyramid

## Rooted in Relationships

Rooted in Relationships is an initiative that partners with communities to implement evidence-based practices that enhance the social-emotional development of children, birth through age eight. One part of this initiative supports communities as they implement the Pyramid Model, a framework of evidence-based practices that promote the social, emotional, and behavioral competence of young children in selected family child care homes and child care centers. In addition, communities develop and implement a long-range plan that influences the early childhood systems of care in the community, and supports the healthy social-emotional development of children. Nebraska AEYC has coordinated the Rooted in Relationships initiative in Lincoln/Lancaster County since 2015.

In 2021-2022, the initiative included:

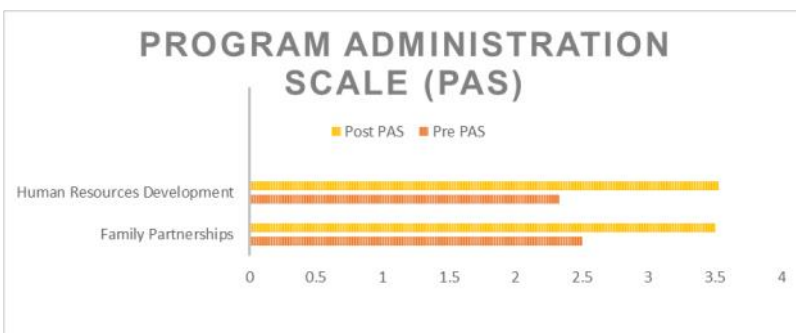
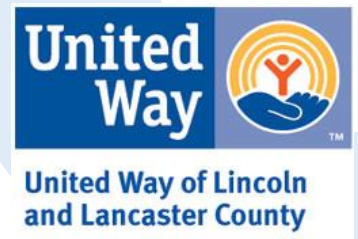
- \* 25 providers in 16 sites
- \* 386 children directly served
- \* 8 trainings
- \* 5 collaboration meetings among providers
- \* Provider retention rate was 84%
- \* Supports for healthy social-emotional development through COSP classes, PIWI classes, a social-emotional backpack project, and the Lincoln Children's Museum school readiness program



# Quality Enhancement Project (QEP)

## United Way Quality Enhancement Project (QEP)

The goal of the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) is to improve quality in early childhood settings through assessment, coaching, materials, and training by utilizing a combination of activities and resources to produce a measurable increase in the quality of care being provided to children. Specifically, a pre- and post- Environment Rating Scale (ERS), classroom observations, regular coaching, purchasing classroom materials, and professional development activities are crucial components of the project's success. Nebraska AEYC provided the Quality Enhancement Project in one early childhood program in Lincoln. The program received an ERS, regular coaching, professional development, and funds for purchasing materials and supplies. Working together with the classroom teachers and the program administration, the Nebraska AEYC coach guides the creation of a program improvement plan, offers suggestions for purchasing materials that enhance the environment and learning opportunities, and provides resources or supports that enhance the quality of the program. Additionally, the Nebraska AEYC coach works with the program to enroll in Nebraska's Step Up to Quality system.



# Circle of Security™ Parenting in Nebraska

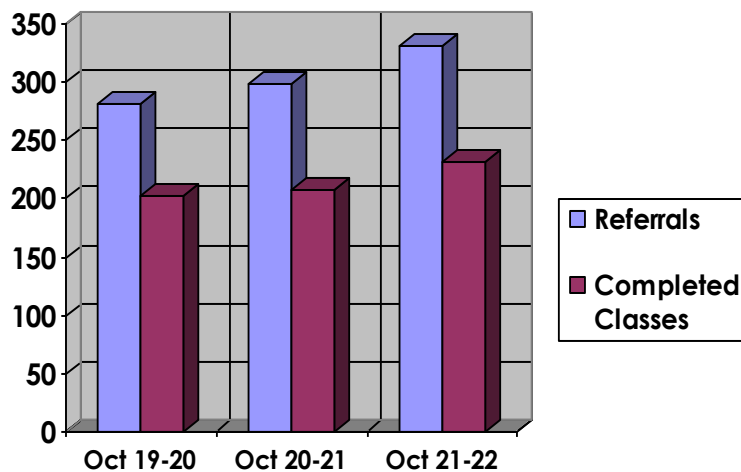


At times, all parents feel lost or without a clue about what our child might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you. The Circle of Security® Parenting™ program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

Using the COSP™ model developed by the Circle of Security originators, our trained facilitators work with parents and caregivers to help them to:

- **Understand** their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- **Support** their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- **Enhance** the development of their child's self esteem
- **Honor** the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure

Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children coordinates Circle of Security referrals for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Nebraska. Below is a graph showing the number of referrals, as well as classes completed over the last three years.



## History of Circle of Security Parenting™ in Nebraska

- 2011-13** Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) programs begin taking place in Nebraska, a Psychologist and other individuals in the Panhandle attended training out of state.
- 2014** A four-day COSP facilitator training was held in Nebraska, 114 facilitators trained. The Nebraska COSP Leadership team is developed.
- 2015-16** Rooted in Relationships (RiR) begins providing systems-level support to facilitators; newsletters, conference calls, a state website ([www.necosp.org](http://www.necosp.org)), and evaluation materials are developed. The first Nebraska evaluation report completed.
- 2017** Second Four-day COSP Facilitator training held in Nebraska, 96 facilitators trained. Peer Reflective Consultation groups begin in Nebraska.
- 2019** DHHS streamlined a system to reimburse facilitators for court-ordered parents to participate, the process is managed by the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC). COSP Facilitators included in the Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice. Fidelity Coaching support opportunities available in Nebraska.
- 2020** Virtual programs are approved, materials adapted for online use. Individuals able to attend facilitator training online.
- 2021-22** Circle of Security Classroom (COSC) begins, over 30 facilitators are trained in the Classroom endorsement with grant funds and COSC programs supported. Training series developed to support current facilitators. Grant funding utilized to support the training of 18 more facilitators who speak a variety of languages and live in areas of the state where there were no trained facilitators.



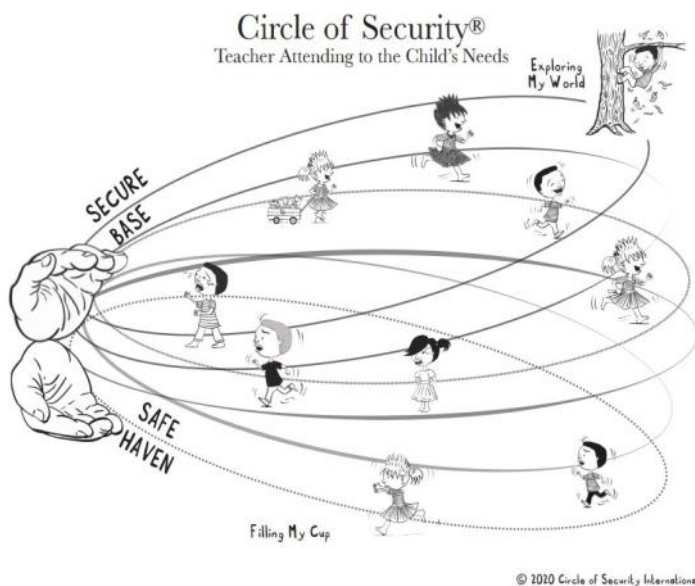
# Circle of Security™ Classroom in Nebraska



Early care professionals benefit from guidance on how to promote secure attachment relationships with the children in their care.

The Circle of Security Classroom (COSC) Approach is designed to enhance teachers' abilities to form secure relationships, and offers critical organizing principles from attachment theory to improve teacher confidence and competence in relationship building. This fosters strong, secure teacher-student relationships, and ultimately, student learning.

The COSC Approach is a two-tier approach to support secure relationships in the classroom by first equipping teachers with professional learning opportunities and, then, the application in the classroom through supportive coaching.



Nebraska AEYC supports COSP Classroom with funding and support from the Nebraska Preschool Development Grant (PDG). These PDG funds were used to train 29 new COSP Classroom facilitators and support 50 classes across the state. This program is approved for 12 in-service hours for early childhood professionals who complete the learning series.

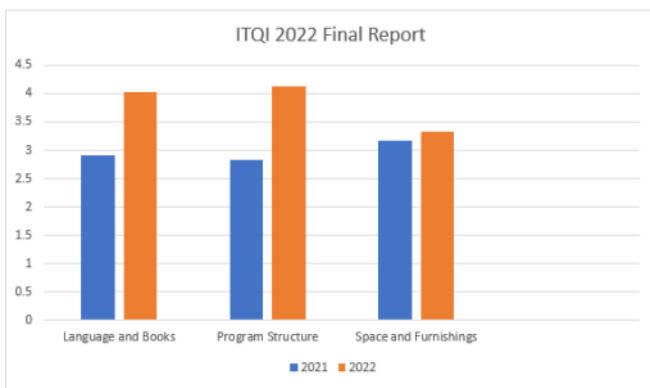
The blending of funds has increased our success by offering more Circle of Security Parenting and Classroom classes across the state. We are grateful for all of our partners in our projects.



# Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative (ITQI)

Nebraska AEYC, in collaboration with Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties and funding through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, provides the Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative (ITQI) as an opportunity for child care providers in both centers and family child care homes serving infants and toddlers, to increase the quality of care and early education offered.

This year, the ITQI program supported nine center-based classrooms and one family child care home. These participants received pre and post Environment Rating Scale (ERS) observations, monthly individualized coaching sessions, funds to enhance materials for the classrooms, professional development opportunities, and on-going communication from their coach.



## Areas of focus this year included:

Strategies to increase self-regulation

Social-emotional development

Program structure and physical environments

Language and books

# The Nebraska AEYC Leadership Academy

The Nebraska AEYC Leadership Academy, funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, aims to increase the leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities of early childhood education program directors and family child care providers. With these new skills in place, these program directors and providers will become more confident and competent leaders in their programs, the larger early childhood profession, and the broader community. Over the course of nine monthly meetings, participants spend time focusing on their leadership styles, their successes and challenges relating to leadership, strengthening the leadership within their programs, and building leadership opportunities in their communities.

In 2021-2022, the Leadership Academy served ten center-based directors and five family child care homes in the communities of Fremont, Beatrice, and Grand Island.

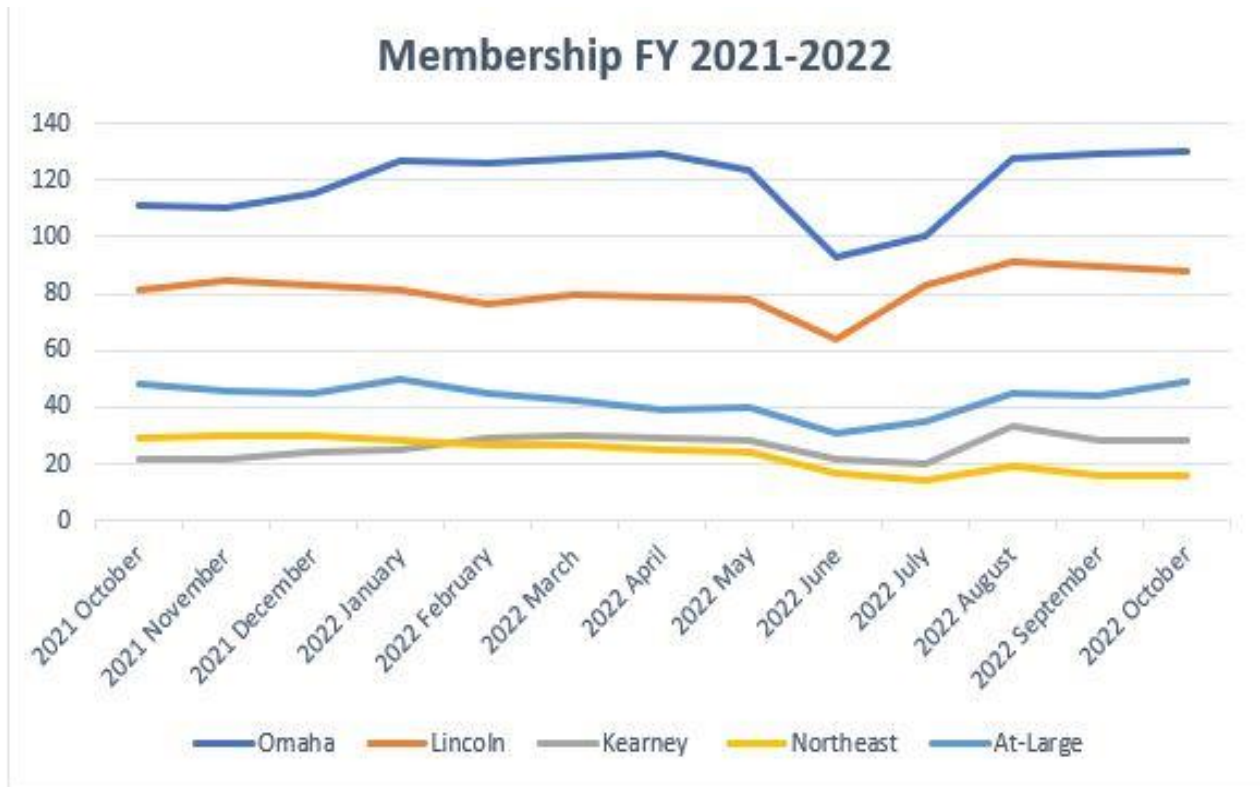
Leadership Academy participants engage in conversations around the following topics:

- ◆ Exploring leadership styles
- ◆ Identifying core beliefs
- ◆ Emotional Intelligence assessment
- ◆ Identifying their “sabotour”
- ◆ Strengths Finder assessment
- ◆ Effective communication



# Nebraska AEYC Membership & Chapters

During the fiscal year of October 2021 through September 2022, Nebraska AEYC had an average of 301 members, with an average retention rate of 60% through our four chapters located in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, and the Northeast area and At-Large members.



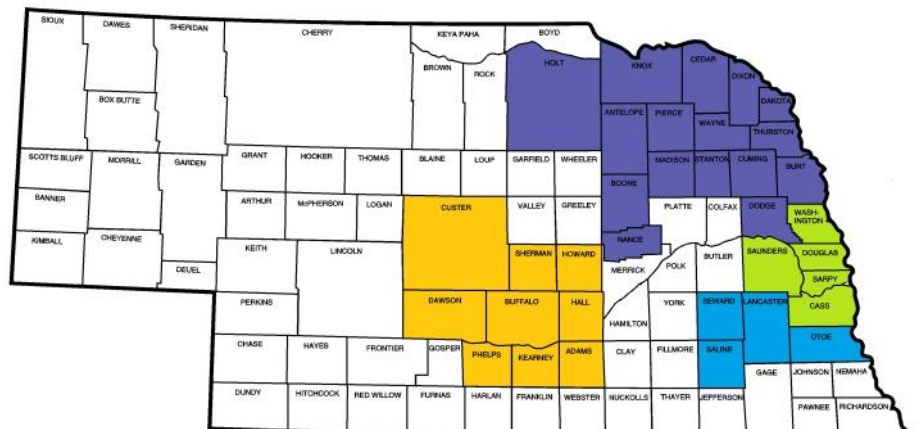
## 2021-2022 NEBRASKA AEYC CHAPTERS

**Omaha Chapter of Nebraska AEYC**  
*Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders, Washington*

**Lincoln Chapter of Nebraska AEYC**  
*Lancaster, Otoe, Saline, Seward*

**Kearney Chapter of Nebraska AEYC**  
*Adams, Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Hall, Howard, Kearney, Phelps, Sherman*

**Northeast Chapter of Nebraska AEYC**  
*Antelope, Boone, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Holt, Knox, Madison, Nance, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne*



Nebraska AEYC is an affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The NAEYC Affiliate Network is a vibrant community of nonprofit organizations dedicated to providing local member engagement opportunities, resources, conferences, professional development, and advocacy efforts for our shared members.



NAEYC aims to ensure that our nation's policies and practices catch up with the significant body of research and science about the individual and collective benefits that accrue when children have access to high-quality early learning settings with supported, skilled, and knowledgeable teachers—because that's when we will deliver on the promise of early learning.

To learn more about NAEYC's federal and state public policy agendas visit:

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/federal-and-state-agendas>

## With Gratitude

Thank you to the following individuals that donated to the organization during the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

Francisco Beeza  
Quentin Brown  
Melanie Cordry  
Adam Feser  
Kimberle Hall  
Tracy Gordon

James R. Johnson  
Rusty Lashley  
Brandee Lengel  
Linda Mazlowski  
Alan & Linda Muskin  
Jeff Pippitt

Laura Uridil  
Jill Snyder  
Jenny Wallinger  
Janeen Ward  
Julie Warford  
Amazon Smile participants

### 2021-2022 Funding for Nebraska AEYC Programs Supported by:

Community Action Partnership of Lancaster & Saunders Counties  
Community Health Endowment of Lincoln  
Nebraska Children & Families Foundation  
Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund  
Nebraska Department of Education—Office of Early Childhood  
Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services  
Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative  
United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster County

### Nebraska AEYC Board of Directors

Quentin Brown  
Cama Charlet  
Adam Feser  
Rietta Glesmann  
Carrie Gottschalk  
Kimberle Hall  
Robin Kolumban  
Melissa LaRue  
Jennifer Miller  
Dawn Mollenkopf  
Andreea Shnyder  
Betsy Tonniges  
Jenny Wallinger  
Chantel Tonkinson

Nebraska AEYC is a proud member of Give Nebraska.



# neaeyc



**Nebraska AEYC, Inc.  
650 J Street Suite 23  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
[www.NebraskaAEYC.org](http://www.NebraskaAEYC.org)**