

neaeyc
An Affiliate of **naeyc**

Nebraska Association for the
Education of Young Children

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2022-23

Nebraska AEYC

Welcome Letter

Dear Friends,

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 2022-2023 Nebraska AEYC Annual Report.

As we take a moment to reflect on the past year, I am so grateful to our funders, stakeholders, members, board of directors, and staff who have made it possible for us to carry out our mission driven work. Allowing us to provide opportunities that promote excellence in early childhood for Nebraska's early childhood educators, children, and families through education, advocacy, and leadership keeps us focused and motivated on a collective vision of a Nebraska where all children, families, and educators have access to high quality opportunities that support positive, lasting outcomes.

Our passion and our work are driven by our vision and mission. Our success is accomplished across the state through our educational programs, leadership opportunities, and shared advocacy. Nebraska AEYC collaborates with stakeholders, business leaders, educators, and communities statewide to work towards solutions to ensure that all children have access to high quality early childhood education programs; early childhood educators are supported, well educated, and well compensated; and families have the skills and abilities they need to form strong, lasting, and impactful relationships with their children.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the progress of this past year by reading more about our work in this report and join us in building a Nebraska where we all thrive.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Gordon".

Tracy Gordon,
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Kolumban".

Robin Kolumban,
Board of Directors President



Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

Nebraska AEYC

About Us



Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to strengthening and supporting Nebraska's early childhood community. We are the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest early childhood professional organization in the world.

Vision

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

The mission of Nebraska AEYC is to provide opportunities that promote excellence in early childhood for Nebraska's early childhood educators, children and families through education, advocacy and leadership.

Our Team



Left to right:

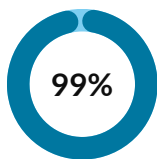
- Janice Perry, Circle of Security Project Assistant,
- Tracy Gordon, Executive Director
- Sarah Lowe, Circle of Security Project Coordinator
- Jill Snyder, Project Coordinator
- Julie Warford, T.E.A.C.H. & WAGE\$ Counselor
- Amanda Ross-Hoffer, Finance Manager
- Emma Baker, Administrative Assistant

2022-23 by the Numbers

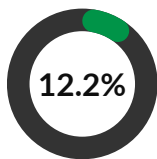
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| 10 Nebraska AEYC Programs | 301 Average monthly NEAEYC members |
| 88% of grant funds went directly to NEAEYC programs | 38 Nebraska counties with NEAEYC members |
| 122 T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships given to Early Childhood Educators | 3 Nebraska AEYC Chapters |

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nebraska

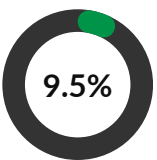
In Nebraska, the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children administers the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program. In FY23, the program helped **122 early education professionals** increase their education. T.E.A.C.H. recipients show powerful dedication to remaining in their programs with turnover rates far less than the national average. This year alone, **6,243 of Nebraska's children** were cared for in settings by educators who participated in T.E.A.C.H.



99% of T.E.A.C.H. recipients would recommend it to their peers, and 95% of their employers would recommend it to others



Average increase in earnings for recipients on a Bachelor's degree scholarship



Average increase in earnings for recipients on an Associate degree scholarship



I would have never gone back to school if it weren't for this scholarship. Extremely grateful!

-T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient



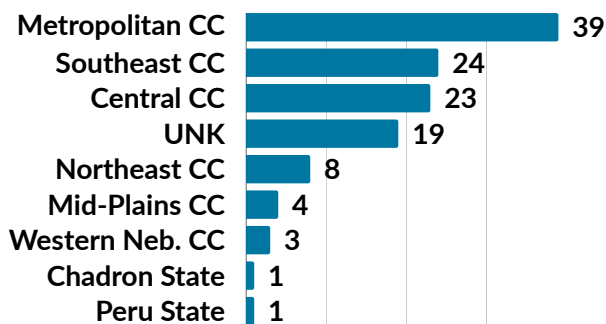
The scholarship has meant everything to me. It has given me the opportunity to continue my education in the field that I love.

-T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient

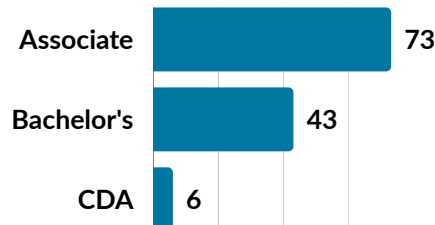


| | |
|--|---|
| 122 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Recipients | 1,366 Credit hours completed |
| 3.31 Average GPA of Bachelor's degree scholarship recipients | 3.22 Average GPA of Associate degree scholarship recipients |

Recipient Distribution by School



Recipient Distribution by Degree Pursuit



Child Care WAGE\$® Nebraska

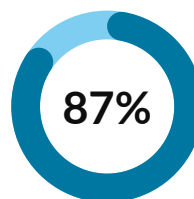


The quality of early care and education a child receives is directly linked to teacher education and compensation, but in Nebraska, many early educators do not have higher education degrees and earn less than \$15 an hour. The Child Care WAGE\$® Program provides education-based salary supplements to early educators to address the key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the early childhood workforce. WAGE\$ supplements make the early childhood field a more affordable and attractive professional option, thus reducing turnover rates. WAGE\$ offers higher financial awards as participants earn additional education, creating an important incentive to return to school. Ongoing supplements at the lower levels of education on the WAGE\$ scale are contingent upon completion of more coursework.

In 2022-2023...

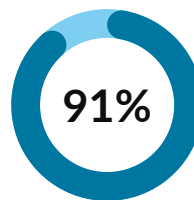
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| 17 Childcare professionals received supplements | \$1,082 Average 6-month supplement |
| 15 Nebraska counties represented | 112 Nebraska children benefited from a more educated teacher |

“WAGE\$ was one of the factors that made me decide to keep my in-home program open once all of my own children started school.”
-WAGE\$ recipient



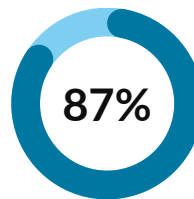
Personal Impact

87% of participants said receiving a WAGE\$ supplement helped ease financial stress.



Retention

91% of participants continued in their early childhood education programs.



Education

87% of participants had an Associate degree in ECE or higher.

Rooted in Relationships Lancaster County

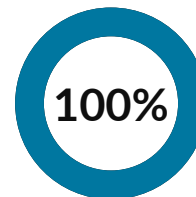


Rooted in Relationships (RiR) is a statewide initiative that partners with communities to implement evidence-based practices that enhance the social-emotional development of children, birth through age 8. RiR supports communities to implement the Pyramid Model and establish a multi-disciplinary stakeholder team charged with developing and implementing a long-range plan to influence the early childhood systems of care that supports the healthy social-emotional development of children. Lancaster County began implementing the RiR initiative in 2015, coordinated by Nebraska AEYC and supported by stakeholders from the Access to Quality Care and Education workgroup (a subgroup of the Lincoln Early Childhood Network).

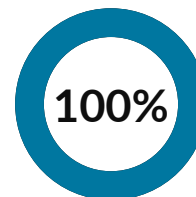
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| 279 Coaching visits logged by 4 coaches providing training | 31 Providers given training and implementation support |
| 490 Nebraska families served directly | 604 Nebraska children served directly |

The most common coaching activity was problem solving/reflection, and coaches most frequently helped providers with improving the environment.

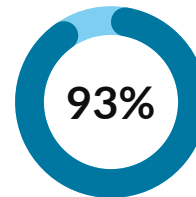
“ I’ve just learned so much, it has helped my teaching...I feel like [RiR] is just build for me as a person and a teacher. ”
-Program participant



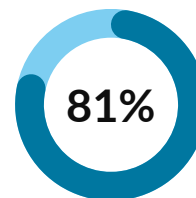
100% of participants share information with parents about ways to support children’s social-emotional development.



100% believe the Pyramid Model coaching around behavior challenges or social emotional concerns has been helpful.

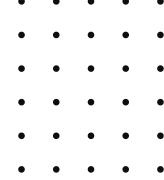


93% of sites were retained in RiR



81% of providers were retained in RiR

Circle of Security - Parenting



In Nebraska, multiple layers of support are provided for COSP facilitators. Building and supporting an infrastructure that supports COS facilitators is essential to ensuring ongoing fidelity to the model and encouraging facilitators to continue offering classes. Coordinating multiple grant sources, supporting facilitator challenges around working with families, and the nature of the helping profession makes this infrastructure critical to maintain the infrastructure needed to have a thriving COS program in Nebraska.



341

Statewide DHHS Referrals sent for COSP

27

NE Child Abuse Prevention Fund Classes Completed

11

Newly trained facilitators

45

Preschool Development Grant Classes Completed

What did participants tell us about their experience?



Stand back and look at the bigger picture of what is happening. My child needs something from me and is not doing something to me.



I learned how to respond appropriately to my children's needs and wants. I learned how to ask questions to figure out where they are on the circle.



I feel like I am able to find a better balance with my behaviors/emotions which in turn helps me with my children's emotions and behaviors. I have also been able to share what I have learned with a friend, and she has seen a difference with her child.



- Virtual delivery of COSP has increased access for both parents and teachers seeking to improve their parenting skills and classroom behavior.
- COSP was effectively implemented across communities with parents demonstrating significant increases in parenting skills, improved relationships with their children, and decreased parenting stress.
- The adaptation of traditional COSP to be used by early care and education professionals (teachers) for classroom environments has been successful and met the needs of educators across the state.
- Facilitators viewed reflective consultation as a valuable resource as it helped them reflect on themselves, their facilitation practice and ultimately helped them be more sensitive as they worked with the participants.

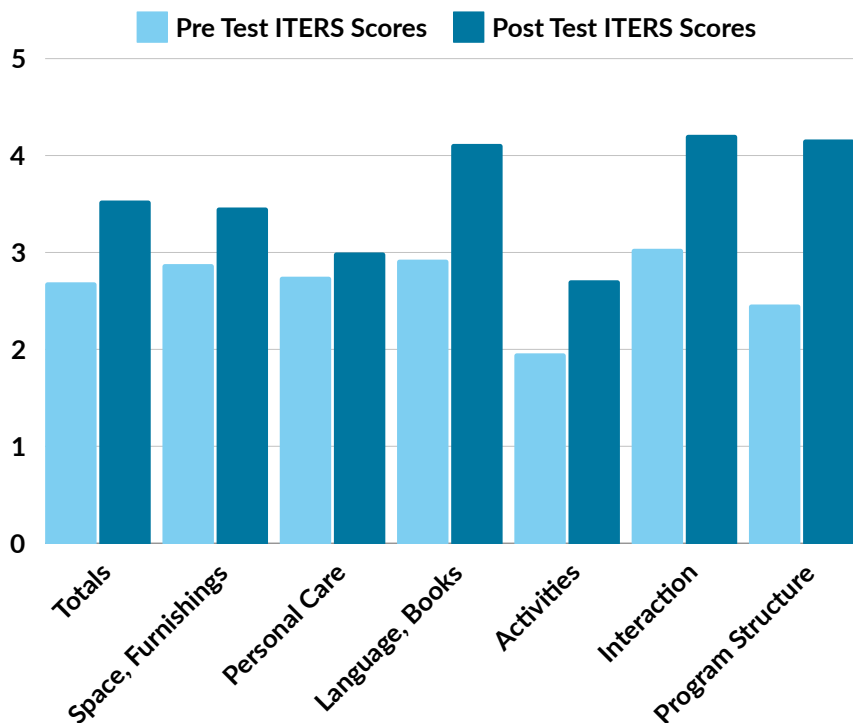


Nebraska AEYC Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative

Since 2009, Nebraska AEYC has been partnering with Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders counties to offer the Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative. ITQI presents opportunities for center and family-based providers to improve quality and professionalism through coaching, observations, and additional materials for children's use.

In utilizing the outcomes from Environment Rating Scales observations, goals are developed in collaboration with coach and coachee. This year demonstrated the largest increases in the subscale areas of Interactions and Program Structure, which are the foundation of early childhood environments.

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale® (ITERS) consists of 39 items organized into 6 subscales, shown along the x-axis. Programs who participated in ITQI in 2022-23 showed growth in every subscale.



Children at Just Like Mine childcare using materials provided by ITQI funding.

Image Credit: Liz Arnold

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale® (FCCERS) consists of 33 items organized into 6 subscales.



I was so happy with my FCCERS scores. I know that is because of the opportunity to buy so many materials with [ITQI].

-Liz Arnold, Owner of Step 5 program Just Like Mine



Nebraska AEYC Leadership Academy

Nebraska AEYC is pleased to offer early childhood center directors and family child care providers the Leadership Academy. This opportunity allows early childhood leaders to identify their personal strengths while learning new strategies to gain a better understanding of their core values and emotional intelligence among other qualities, in their influence of others.

The Leadership Academy provided an opportunity for program leaders to network among colleagues, share ideas, and learn new strategies. Through that, a sense of community was established which led to one cohort continuing to meet informally after the conclusion of the Leadership Academy, as they appreciated the benefits of collaboration.

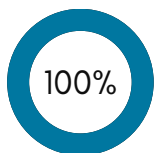
We were excited to be able to offer the opportunity to have international speaker and author Ginger Johnson speak to all Leadership Academy participants. Ginger focused on building connections, which are based in authenticity, and aligning our purpose with our vision as leaders.



Image Credit: Liz Arnold, Owner of Just Like Mine



100% of participants stated because of the Leadership Academy they will be able to **apply information gained in their job and/or life.**



100% of participants agreed that the Leadership Academy was successful in **increasing their knowledge of leadership.**



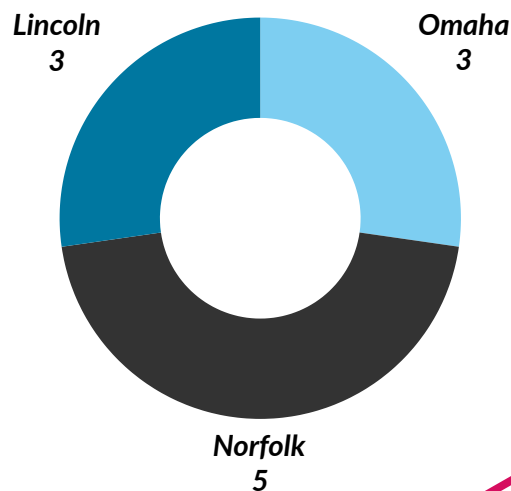
The knowledge between multiple directors to look at improving how we operate as leaders in our profession was super helpful!

-Leadership Academy Participant



11

Leadership Academy Graduates



Nebraska AEYC R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

2022-23 was the second year of a new grant awarded to a collaborative group led by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, including the University of Nebraska at Kearney, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Little Priest Community College, and Nebraska Indian Community College. The grant, Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers Across Nebraska (RESPECT), funded by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Early Educator Investment Collaborative, will build on existing early childhood education assets, collaborators, and successes to build sustainable policies and infrastructure to transform Nebraska’s system for preparing early childhood educators.



2022-23 Accomplishments

Nebraska AEYC staff have been actively engaged with the RESPECT grant, particularly supporting Aim 3.

- **Creation** of an Apprenticeship workgroup
- **Designing an Apprenticeship program**, in collaboration with other entities and regulatory bodies, for both degree seeking and non-degree seeking pathways to certification via workplace experiences.
- **Focus on key areas:** apprentice supports, employer involvement, on the job learning, related coursework, and costs associated with an apprenticeship model.
- Nebraska AEYC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Child Care Services Association (CCSA) and their T.E.A.C.H. National Center to utilize their Federally approved Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program. For the next year, CCSA will provide technical assistance and support as Nebraska builds its own, unique, apprenticeship model.

Aims of R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

- 1** Develop a shared competency-based framework defining common expectations for educator preparation, credentialing, and licensing across all early childhood settings.
- 2** Cultivate authentic community partnerships to ensure contextually grounded and culturally sustaining implementation of competency-based curriculum and accessible pathways.
- 3** Develop accessible pathways and support mechanisms to ensure equitable education and certification opportunities for all members of Nebraska’s early childhood workforce.

Board of Directors 2022-23

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Cama Charlet
Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Rietta Glesmann
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Carrie Gottschalk
University of Nebraska- Extension

Kimberle Hall
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Pinnacle Bank

Chantel Tonkinson
Ladybug Early Learning Center

Betsy Tonniges
Primrose School of Lincoln

Jenny Wallinger- Secretary
Family Service of Lincoln

Thank You to Our Departing Board Members!



Carrie Gottschalk
University of Nebraska- Extension
2021-2023



Betsy Tonniges
Primrose School of Lincoln
2020-2023

Nebraska AEYC NAEYC & Local Chapters

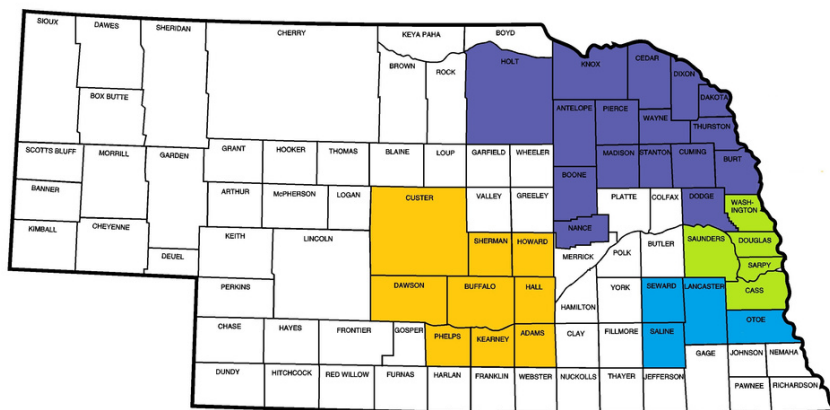
Nebraska AEYC is an affiliate of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. The NAEYC Affiliate Network is a vibrant community of nonprofit organizations dedicated to providing local member engagement opportunities, resources, conferences, professional development, and 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 learning settings with supported, skilled, and knowledgeable teachers- because that's when we will deliver on the promise of early learning.



Nebraska AEYC Local Chapters

Nebraska AEYC supports a local chapter network that provides **resources, support and networking opportunities for members** across the state of Nebraska. Chapters uphold the mission and goals of NAEYC, by offering opportunities that support excellence to our members and the broader community. Chapters can offer **professional development opportunities, Week of the Young Child events, local advocacy efforts and networking experiences to their local early childhood communities**. The purpose of Nebraska AEYC chapters includes, but is not limited to, serving and acting on behalf of the needs, rights, and well-being of all young children and their families, with special emphasis on developmental and educational services and resources and **fostering the growth and development of the membership in their work with, and on behalf of, young children**.



- Legend**
- Kearney
 - Lincoln
 - Omaha
 - Northeast

Nebraska AEYC Advocacy & Awards

Nebraska AEYC, in collaboration with First Five Nebraska, had multiple opportunities to testify in support of legislation that impacts the early childhood education profession. LB499 extended the School Readiness Tax Credit, LB319 would provide funds to expand the Child Care WAGE\$ program, and LR251 explores the value and benefits of apprenticeships for early childhood educators.

Additionally, Nebraska AEYC led a state team of passionate advocates to Washington, DC for the annual NAEYC Public Policy Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity to meet with our members of Congress to share the challenges and successes experienced by Nebraska's children, families, and early childhood educators. We thank the Congressional offices of Senator Fischer, Congressman Bacon, and Congressman Flood for engaging in conversation with our team!



Tracy Gordon, Executive Director of Nebraska AEYC, testifying in support of childcare bills at the Nebraska State Legislature in April 2023.

Congrats to Brody Hennessy, 2023 Recipient of the Nebraska AEYC Emerging Leader Award!



Left to right:

Julie Warford, NEAEYC T.E.A.C.H. & WAGE\$ Counselor

Brody Hennessy, Las Abejitas Bilingual Education Center

Lameakia Collier, Lincoln Littles

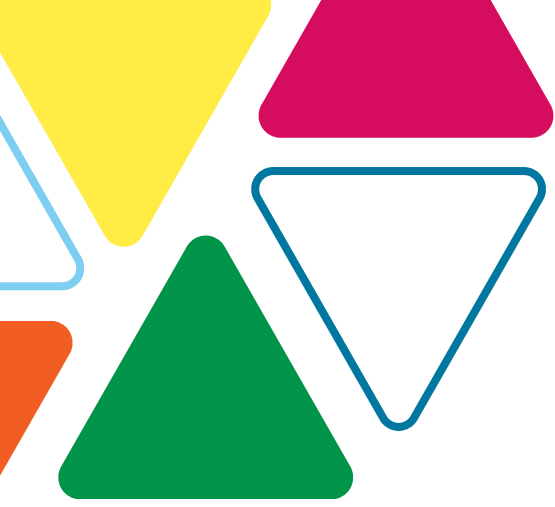
The NEAEYC Emerging Leader Award recognizes and rewards new, emerging leaders in the field of Early Childhood Education in Nebraska. It showcases individual excellence as demonstrated by initiative, the impact of work on the care and education of young children, and/or providing inspiration to others.



Brody shows leadership in the field of Education by consistently going above and beyond in the care of his students...he often takes on additional responsibilities and helps others whenever he's able.

-Lameakia Collier, Lincoln Littles





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Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children



Nebraska AEYC is a proud member of Give Nebraska.

2022-23 Nebraska AEYC Donors

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David Ross
Maggie Stuckey-Ross
Amanda Ross-Hoffer
Jill Snyder
Janeen Ward
Julie Warford

2022-23 Nebraska AEYC Program Funders

Community Action Partnership of Lancaster & Saunders Counties
Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
Nebraska Department of Education
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Thank you to everyone who supported our mission to provide opportunities that promote excellence in early childhood education for Nebraska’s children, families, and early childhood workforce!

Contact Us

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