



# CHILDREN . . . THE HEART OF THE MATTER

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## Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc.

*An affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*

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## ANNUAL REPORT

10/1/03 to 12/31/04

January, 2005

Dear friends of the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Incorporated.

I am pleased to offer this report to those who have exhibited support for and interest in this organization, and hope you will find the information contained to be of value.

Nebraska continues to have a very high percentage of working families, and thousands of young children are receiving care in centers, family child care homes, and preschools. Much data has shown the critical importance of high quality care during the early years. Recent additional data from the Midwest Child Care Survey has shown that less than half of the centers, homes and preschools in Nebraska rated "Good". The rest were considered "Poor" or "Minimal".

We continue to direct our efforts and our resources toward supporting the early childhood field. This is a field that has historically been underpaid, undereducated, and undervalued.

If, after reviewing the report, you have any questions regarding the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project or the Accreditation project, please contact me. You can reach me in Lincoln at:

402-476-2089- phone • lzinke@NebraskaAEYC.org- email

On behalf of the children and families of Nebraska, I thank you for your support.

Very sincerely,

Linda Zinke,  
Executive Director

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Nebraska Association for the Education for Young Children is committed to supporting high quality care and education for young children in the state of Nebraska. The mission of the NeAEYC is to:

- Promote professional development activities,
- Advocate for issues relating to children and families,
- Serve as a resource for local affiliates and for other agencies involved in working with and for children and families,
- Disseminate information supportive of quality services, education and care for children and their families,
- Provide networking opportunities for early childhood professionals and families throughout the state.

## NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN, INC. (NeAEYC)

The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children is a state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the largest early childhood organization in the world. The Nebraska AEYC has existed since 1976 and currently has over 500 members. It is organized as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, with a board of directors and a small staff.

Projects and activities of the NeAEYC include the following:

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project
- Accreditation project
- Local chapters
- Quarterly newsletter
- Website
- Annual summer planning retreat
- Conference support
- Education & advocacy
- Recognition
- Networking activities and opportunities

### MEMBERSHIP

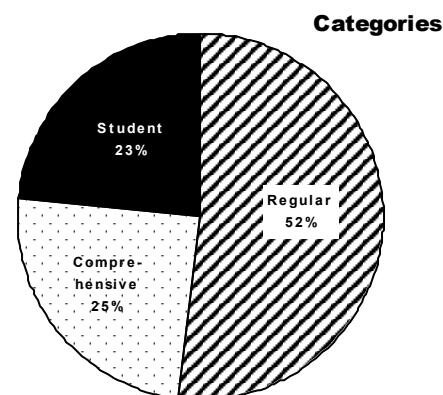
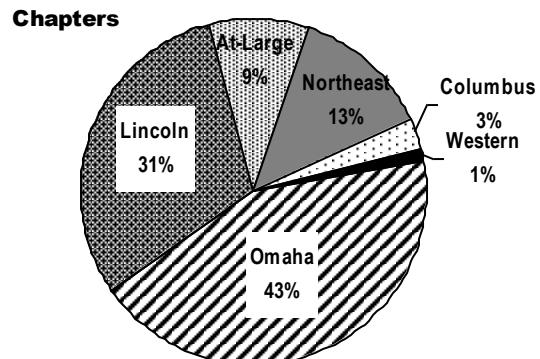
The membership of the NeAEYC is organized as follows:

Two local chapter affiliates:

- Lincoln Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. – Lancaster County  
This chapter includes two student chapters; Southeast Community College, and University of Nebraska at Lincoln
- Omaha Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. – Douglas County

Three local chapters of the NeAEYC:

- Northeast Chapter of the Nebraska AEYC - 12 counties
- Columbus Chapter of the Nebraska AEYC – 6 counties
- Western Chapter of the Nebraska AEYC – 11 counties
- At-large membership



**"I am grateful NeAEYC cares about the children in Nebraska and having educated quality teachers. I am proud to be a member, a participant in T.E.A.C.H. and an early childhood teacher in Nebraska."**

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient- Teacher Assistant  
Madison County

<b>MEMBERSHIP AS OF 12/30/04</b>				
	<b>Reg</b>	<b>Comp</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Omaha</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Lincoln</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>At-Large</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Columbus</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Western</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>518</b>

In December of 2004, the following changes occurred:

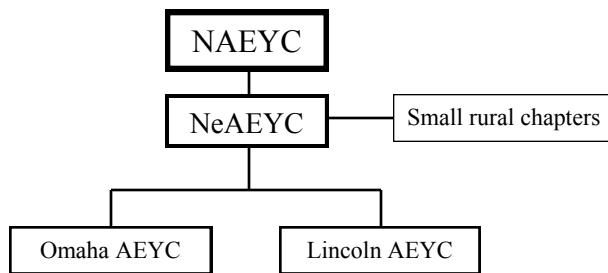
The Northeast Chapter decided to split into two chapters.

- The new Northeast Chapter will now consist of the counties of Madison, Pierce, Wayne, and Stanton. This chapter includes a student chapter at Wayne State College.
- A new chapter, the All Nations Chapter, will consist of Thurston, Dixon, and Dakota counties.
- The remaining counties will become part of the at-large category.

A new chapter, the Sarpy/Cass Chapter of the NeAEYC has also been formed.

The Western Chapter of the Nebraska AEYC decided to dissolve.

## NeAEYC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



## WEBSITE

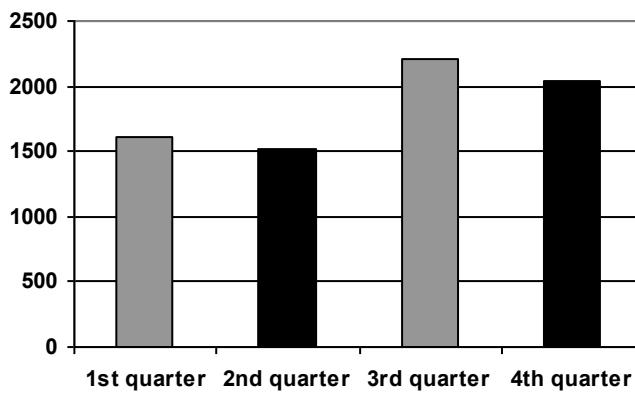
The website traffic continues to increase. We've added sections that include information about the higher education system in the state, as well as information about courses available online.

The first chart shows the visits to the website per quarter.

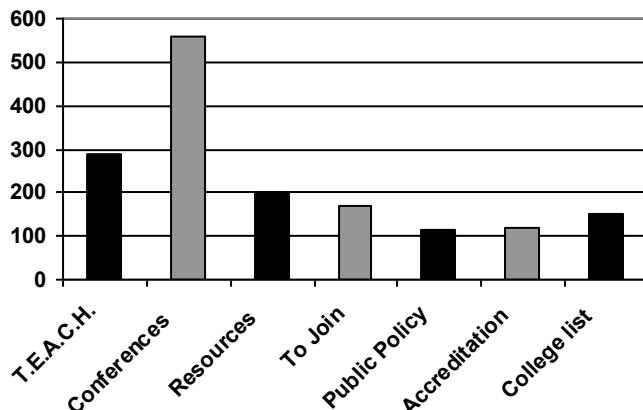
The second chart shows visits to some of the pages on the website. The "college list" was posted in May, 2004, so those numbers reflect a partial year.

Information for the board of directors is now posted in a "Board Only" section.

**View totals by quarter**



**Page visits**



## NEWSLETTER

The newsletter continues to be published four times a year, and mailed to the membership. Each year a survey is sent to the members to gather information regarding the quality of services provided by NeAEYC. Based on the results from the 2004 survey, 95% of the responding members indicated they read the newsletter "Always" or "Frequently".

## WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES, OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

This event provides an opportunity to recognize the early childhood field. It has been sponsored by the National AEYC for many years. In Nebraska, Governor Johanns signed a proclamation proclaiming April 18<sup>th</sup> through April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004 as the Week of the Young Child.

Events were held throughout the state, including a parade in Omaha, the Early Childhood Celebration and recognition event in Lincoln, a luncheon in Columbus, and various other events.

## NETWORKING AND COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

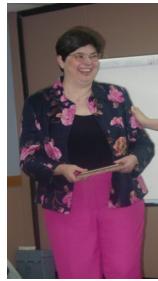
Working together to strengthen the early childhood field, to identify needed services, and to avoid duplication is a goal of the NeAEYC. Staff participated in the following teams and committees:

- Nebraska Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Together for Kids and Families
- Policy Study Leadership Team
- Leadership in Partnership for Early Learning
- Regional Training Projects
- Planning Region Teams
- Nebraska Head Start Association
- Munroe Meyer Consumer Advisory Team
- Southeast Community College Advisory Team
- Voices for Children Health Team
- Prevent Child Abuse NE conference planning team
- Early Connections conference planning team
- Midwest AEYC 2006 conference planning team
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
- Human Resources Federation
- Natural Allies Team
- Community Services Initiative
- Omaha 2000 Team
- Quality Ratings System planning team

Staff attended conferences and provided training throughout the state, sharing information about NeAEYC projects and issues in the early childhood field. Conferences have been attended in Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, Gering, South Sioux City, Seward, Fremont, and Columbus.

## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO CHILDREN AWARD**

This award was developed in 1983 to recognize a NeAEYC member who has provided outstanding service to the organization, its program of work, its development and its membership, or a Nebraskan who has done exemplary work to promote the rights, services, status and programs for/of children.



The 2004 recipient was Terry Rohren. Terry's persistence and dedication in bringing the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project to Nebraska and her support during the implementation has been instrumental in the success of this valuable program. Her leadership with the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council and the Natural Allies project will have a long lasting impact on young children, as will the efforts toward defining the statewide consistent core courses at the community colleges.

## **MIDWEST AEYC CONFERENCE – 2006**

The board of directors voted to host the Midwest AEYC Conference in 2006. A steering committee was developed, and began working on plans for this multi-state conference. Committee chair is Michelle Rupiper. Committee team leaders are:

- Program Committee: Michelle Rupiper & Kathy Zadina
- Public Relations/Fundraising Committee:  
Nancy Rosenow & Ellen Freeman-Wakefield
- Vendor Committee: Brandee Lengel & Tracy Gordon
- Hospitality Committee: Jessica LaChere & Gladys Haynes

**This conference will be held in Omaha at the Qwest Center on April 27-29, 2006.**

## **PLANNING RETREAT**

The annual planning retreat was again held at Mahoney State Park. Participants, in addition to the Board of Directors and staff, included representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education, Health and Human Services System, Early Childhood Training Center, Nebraska Family Child Care Association, Head Start State Collaboration Office, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Midwest Child Care Study team, and a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholar.

Information on progress toward the previous goals was presented, including the growth of the website, conference calling capabilities, new student chapters, advocacy efforts, fund development, and conference/committee participation.

This retreat helps to unite the early childhood field, and is used as a forum to identify ways in which the NeAEYC can best strengthen and support the field. Goals from the 2004 retreat focused around public awareness and advocacy issues.

## **LEGISLATIVE EVENTS**

NeAEYC hosted three legislative events. These educational activities focused on:

- The critical importance of high quality early care and education,
- What other states are doing in this area,
- What's happening in Nebraska, and
- Initiatives leading toward improvement.

These events were held in partnership with the Nebraska Head Start Association, Child Care Solutions, Wayne State University, Voices for Children, and the Nebraska Coalition for Early Childhood Education.

Events were held in Grand Island at Central Community College, Wayne at Wayne State College, and the state capital building in Lincoln.

**In total, 90 people attended these events, including 24 legislators and legislative aides.**

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES**

The ideas and information generated through meetings and committees, including the planning retreat, resulted in the development of a set of early childhood initiatives and goals:

- Recommendation #1: Expand Nebraska's Early Childhood Education Grants Program for Vulnerable Children Ages 3-4 Years and for Children Ages 0-3.
- Recommendation #2: Phase in Full-Day Kindergarten in All Nebraska Public Schools.
- Recommendation #3: Support Development of the Early Childhood/Child Care Workforce and Enhance Quality of Child Care.
- Recommendation #4: Create an Early Childhood Endowment.

**“If you don’t stand up for children, you don’t stand up for much.”**

**Marian Wright Edelman**

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

This past year, the Association gathered additional funds through our first ever direct mail campaign, board donations, a grant from the Midwest AEYC and two additional small grants.

**Over \$7,000 in additional funds were donated to support NeAEYC activities.**

## ACCREDITATION

The NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation administers a national, voluntary, and professionally sponsored accreditation system to help raise the quality of preschools, kindergartens, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The purpose of NAEYC Accreditation is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs in the United States. It provides a process through which early childhood professionals and families can evaluate programs, compare them with professional standards, strengthen the program, and commit to ongoing evaluation and improvement.

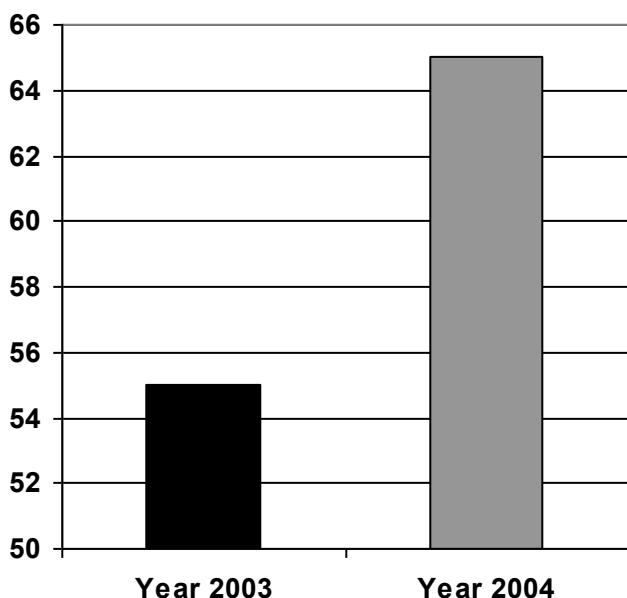
The Accreditation Project, funded through the Nebraska Department of Education and administered by the Nebraska AEYC, gives centers the opportunity to apply for funds to help with the costs of national accreditation and pays for costs of materials and validation visit fees that exceed \$75.00.

As of December 31, 2004, there were 65 accredited centers in Nebraska. The project provided funds for self-study materials for 20 programs, funds for validation visits for 21 programs, and funds for the Notification of Intent process for 5 programs.

Centers supported were in Grand Island, Lewellen, Walthill, Sidney, Macy, Bladen, Red Cloud, Blue Hill, Kearney, McCook, North Platte, Lincoln, Winnebago, Gering, Humboldt, Papillion, Elgin, Murray, Omaha, Stella, and Hastings.

**Together, these programs serve nearly 2,400 children.**

### Accredited Centers



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

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® NEBRASKA has completed its third year, and has been a tremendously successful program. This program began in North Carolina through Child Care Services Association. It is now a licensed program, available in 24 states. This program has four major components:

- Education – improving the educational level of those caring for the children;
- Scholarship – funds to support the costs of the education;
- Compensation – the participants receive a bonus from the T.E.A.C.H. project. Teachers and Director/Employees also receive a bonus or salary increase from their sponsoring center;
- Continuity – the participants agree to remain at their current work place for an additional period of time, to reduce turnover.

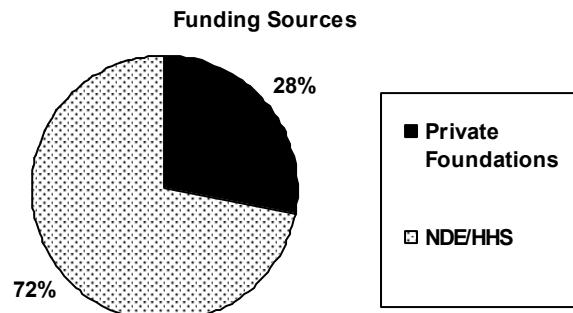
The program is a collaborative effort among T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA, community colleges, the participants, and sponsoring centers.

**225 scholars participated in T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA in the fifteen month period from 10/1/03 – 12/31/04. 191 of these are current active scholars.**

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Scholarship participants must be working in a licensed child care facility. The participants live in 46 counties across Nebraska.

T.E.A.C.H. participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds. During this current year, we have made a concentrated effort to serve a larger minority population. This effort was driven in part by the receipt of private foundation funds from the Peter Kiewit Foundation, the Lozier Foundation, and the William and Ruth Scott Foundation. Three-quarters of these private foundation funds were earmarked for Douglas County.



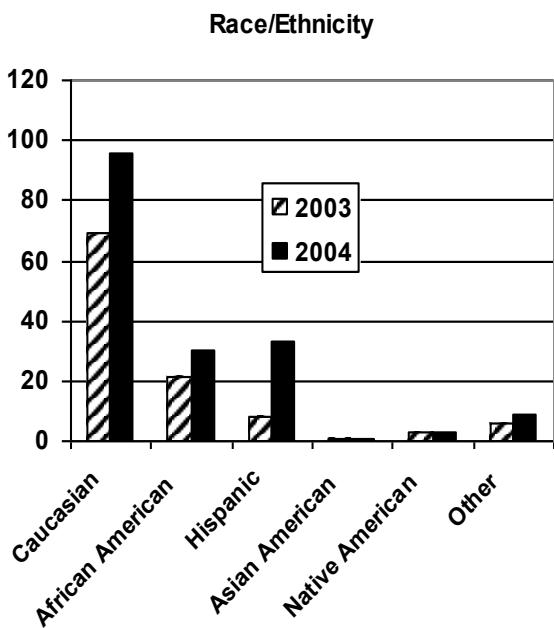
## RACE-ETHNICITY

The Latino population of Nebraska is rapidly growing. In Douglas County, this population comprises 6.7% of the general population, but is 12% of the 0-4 age category, resulting in over 4,000 Douglas County Latino children. Many of these children are receiving care in a handful of large child care centers in South Omaha and from family child care providers.

Due to a collaborative effort, a limited number of early childhood college credit courses are now being offered in Spanish at Metropolitan Community College. The following courses have been provided:

- Early Childhood Education Methods, 4.5 credits, Summer-2004
- Early Education Planning, 1 credit, Fall-2004
- Curriculum Planning for Preschoolers, 4.5 credits, Fall-2004
- Children's Literature, 4.5 credits, scheduled for Winter-2005

All the teaching is done in Spanish, and textbooks and resources are available in Spanish. Plans are begin developed to offer six basic early childhood courses. Ten to fourteen students have been participating in the classes.

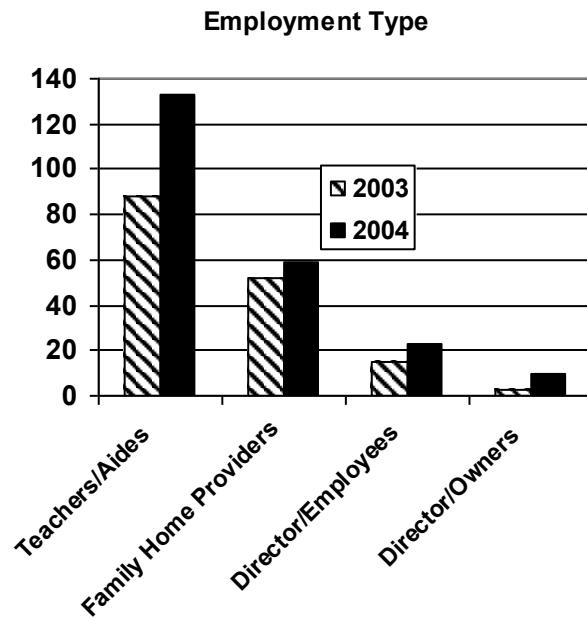


## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

83% of the responding sponsoring child care centers and family child care homes accept child care subsidy.

## EMPLOYMENT TYPE

The following graph shows the employment type of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA participants (both active and inactive).

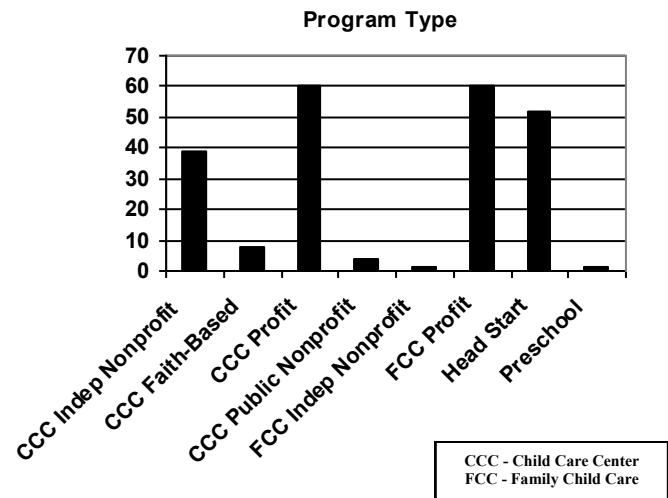


**“The scholarship has inspired me to make the time to further my education.”**

Scholarship Recipient- Center Director-Owner  
Lincoln County

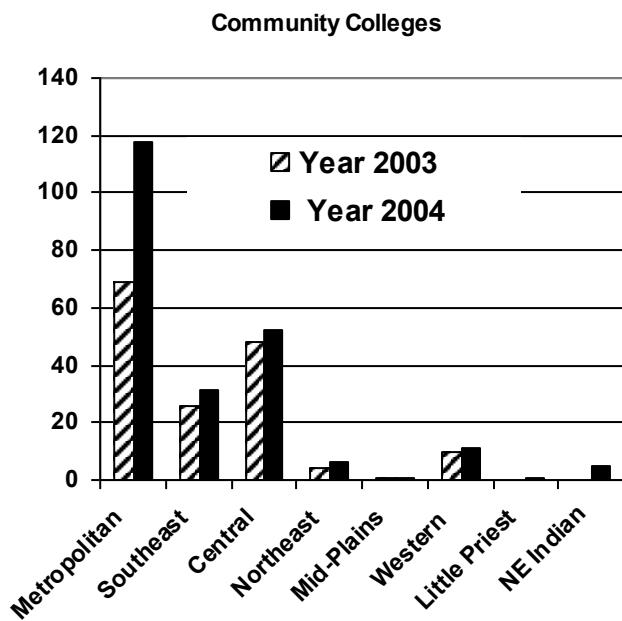
## PROGRAM TYPE

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA funds provide support in a variety of early childhood settings:



## EDUCATION

T.E.A.C.H. participants take courses at community colleges and work toward their two-year degree in early childhood/child development. They are required to take 12-18 quarter credits or 9-15 semester credits within a 12 month period, and to earn at least a grade of "C" to successfully complete their contract. Students have attended the following community colleges:



**During this period, these students have earned 1,645 credits.**

## COMPENSATION

At the successful completion of a contract, the T.E.A.C.H. project provides a bonus of \$350, paid in two installments. This bonus is contingent on the completion of the required number of credits, and the continued employment of the participant at the same child care facility.

Additionally, teachers and director/employees are provided either a matching bonus of \$350 or a minimum salary increase of 2%. At the beginning of each contract, center directors make their choice of a raise or bonus.

Sponsoring centers elected to provide a bonus for 50% of the teachers and a raise for the other 50%.

Sponsoring centers opted to provide a raise for 30% of the Director/Employees, and a bonus for the other 70%.

**"People take you seriously when you're taking classes. Being a student at the age of 44 is scary! I've been successful so I'm more confident now."**

Scholarship Recipient- Center Director-Employee  
Knox County

## CONTINUITY

The T.E.A.C.H. contract requires that the participants remain at their current place of employment for an additional year following the completion of their contract. Many students opt to renew their contract, and continue working toward their two-year degree.

34 students are no longer participating in T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA.

- 11 have graduated from their community college
- 4 have completed their contract and commitment year, but chose not to renew.
- 19 have withdrawn:
  - 11 withdrew prior to the completion of their contract year
  - 4 completed their education but did not fulfill the employment commitment
  - 4 are no longer eligible for the scholarship

## SCHOLARSHIP

The T.E.A.C.H. Project provides funds for 80% of the cost of tuition and books, a travel stipend, funds to help the centers provide paid time off for the participants, and funds for bonuses. In most cases, the tuition and books funds are paid directly to the community colleges. The remaining 20% is paid by the participants and their sponsoring center (where applicable).

The T.E.A.C.H. project does not replace already existing funding sources, but can fill in gaps in support.

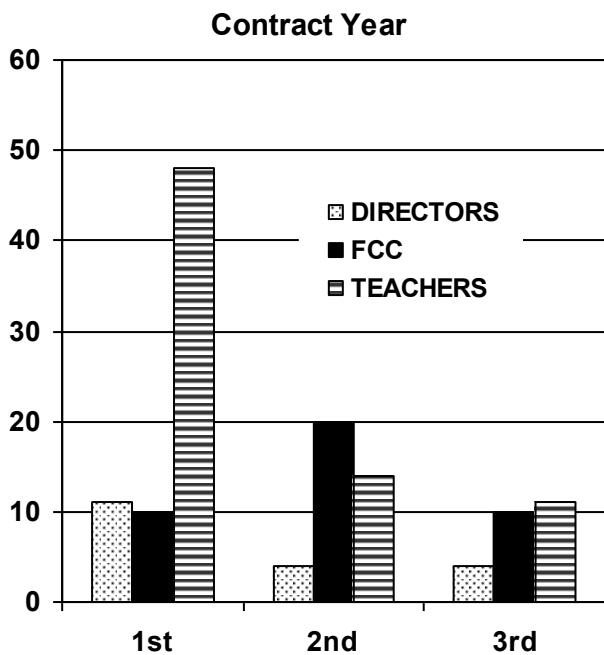
## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project receives suggestions and ideas from the T.E.A.C.H. Advisory Committee:

- Marcia Corr, Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln
- Sue Jensen, Health & Human Service Systems-Child Care Licensing, Grand Island
- Chris Kline, First National Bank, Omaha
- Marjorie Kostelnik, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Diane Lewis, Health & Human Service Systems, Lincoln
- Betty Medinger, Health & Human Service Systems, Lincoln
- Betty Redleaf, Little Priest Tribal College, Winnebago
- Terry Rohren, Early Childhood Training Center, Omaha
- Mary Jo Sharp, Family Child Care Provider, Lincoln
- Paula Thompson, Central NE Community Services, Loup City
- Leah Townsend, Noah's Ark Child Care Center, Grand Island
- Jeanne Webb, Central Community College, Grand Island
- Kelly Vanness, Regional Training Project, Columbus

## CONTRACT RENEWAL

The chart reflecting the contract renewal information only includes the participants funded through the original funding source. Private dollars became available in October 2003, but few of these recipients have been participating long enough to provide data on contract renewal.



It is interesting to note that:

- 75% of the family child care providers are on their second or third contract,
- 42% of the directors are on their second or third contract, and
- 34% of the teachers are on their second or third contract.

**"I have changed so much in my child care program. I am happier and my family and daycare families are happier and excited with the new techniques that I have implemented in my program."**

**"I am so grateful to T.E.A.C.H. I had reached a point where I felt being a child care provider was a dead end. Going back to school has improved me as a person! I never would have been able to go to school without this program. Plus I have a better outlook about my job."**

Scholarship Recipient  
Family Child Care Provider Phelps County

## TEACH SURVEY INFORMATION

### Student Surveys

As a part of the evaluation process, a survey regarding the effectiveness of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project was distributed. 33% of the student surveys were returned. Here are some of the highlights:

- 82% said they intended to continue their education the following year
- 78% of those not planning to continue their education, plan to graduate
- 94% said they have used what they have learned in the classroom with the children
- 98% said they have shared what they have learned with other staff
- 81% said, I have increased my knowledge of child development
- 83% said, I have improved my teaching techniques
- 100% said they would recommend T.E.A.C.H. to others in the early childhood field

### Center Surveys

A survey was also sent to the center directors. 20% of these surveys were returned. When asked how the increased education has impacted their center:

- 100% agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the recipient has increased their early childhood knowledge and skills
- 100% agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the recipient has influenced her coworkers to use new teaching techniques, and
- 100% agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the recipient has improved relationships with the children and their families.

## FUNDS

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA is funded through a contract with the Nebraska Department of Education with funds from the Health and Human Services System from the Child Care Grant Funds.

During this past year 18 participants accessed Pell Grant funds, for a total of over \$10,000.

Additional funding was received from the Peter Kiewit Foundation, the Lozier Foundation, and the William and Ruth Scott Foundation.

Support funds to provide educational services to the Spanish speaking population in Douglas County were provided through the Head Start State Collaboration Project.

## STAFF

**Linda Zinke**  
Executive Director

**Brandee Lengel**  
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Coordinator

**Patricia Hoffschneider**  
Administrative Assistant