



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

2005

January, 2006

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. 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 community. 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, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project, the Accreditation project, or the Quality Enhancement Pilot Project, please contact me. You can reach me in Lincoln at:

402-476-2089 • lzinke@NebraskaAEYC.org

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 of 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:

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA project
- Accreditation project
- Quality Enhancement Pilot 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 (At-large members do not belong to a local chapter):

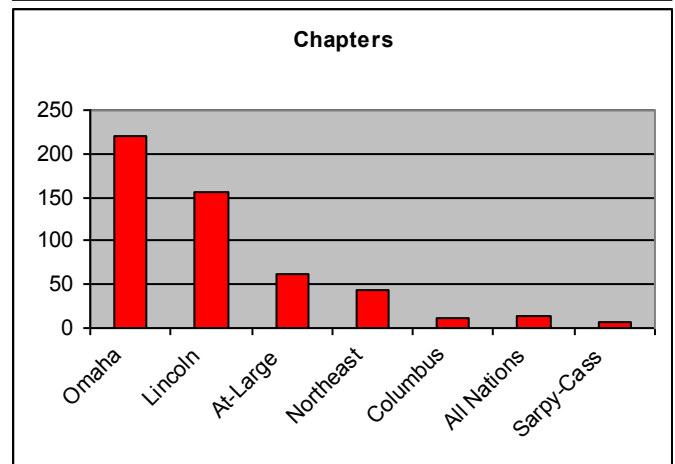
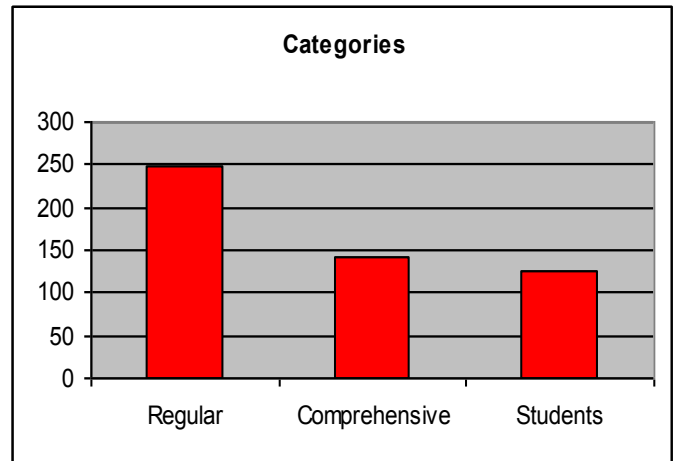
Two local chapter affiliates:

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

Four local chapters of the Nebraska AEYC:

- Northeast Chapter of the NeAEYC - 4 counties - includes a student chapter at Wayne State
- Columbus Chapter of the NeAEYC - 6 counties
- All Nations Chapter of the NeAEYC - 3 counties
- Sarpy-Cass Chapter of the NeAEYC - 2 counties
- At-large membership

MEMBERSHIP AS OF 12/30/05				
	Reg	Comp	Student	TOTAL
Omaha	111	57	53	221
Lincoln	70	47	40	157
At-Large	30	23	9	62
Northeast	15	8	21	44
Columbus	11	1	0	12
All Nations	9	4	0	13
Sarpy-Cass	3	1	2	6
TOTAL	249	141	125	515



INTEREST IN NEW CHAPTERS

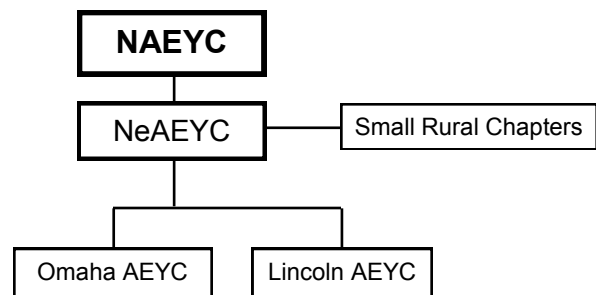
In the fall of 2005, a group in the Fremont area held a meeting to consider starting up a new chapter.

In December of 2005, a group in the Kearney area requested information about forming a new chapter.

CHARTER

The restructuring plan and annual report were accepted by the National AEYC, and the Nebraska AEYC received their official charter.

NeAEYC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



PLANNING RETREAT

The annual planning retreat was held at Mahoney State Park in June, 2005. 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, Nebraska Head Start Association, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Midwest Child Care Study team, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholars/directors, T.E.A.C.H. Advisory Council, Educational Service Units, Child Care Licensing, chapter representatives, and community colleges.

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.

The participants divided into three teams with specific topics:

- Strengthening and expanding T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA,
- Increasing Advocacy and Public Awareness, and
- Strengthening the Association.

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.

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 2005 survey, 100% of the responding members indicated they read the newsletter "Always" or "Frequently". 81% said they preferred it via paper copy. While most said 4 times a year was "Just right", a few would like the newsletter more 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 Heineman signed a proclamation proclaiming April 3rd through April 9th, 2005 as the Week of the Young Child.

Events were held throughout the state, including two celebrations in Omaha (one at the Children's Museum), the Early Childhood Celebration and recognition event in Lincoln, and various other events.

WEBSITE

The website traffic continues to increase. The Midwest Conference has generated much traffic. Information about the Quality Ratings System is now available, as are several documents about the importance of high quality early care and education. Information about higher education and T.E.A.C.H.® Early Childhood NEBRASKA is also available.

	Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05
Page Views	338	577	3,017

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:

- Midwest AEYC 2006 conference planning team
- P-16 (pre-K through college) Team
- Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council
- Regional Training Projects
- Planning Region Teams
- Nebraska Head Start Association
- Munroe Meyer Consumer Advisory Team
- Southeast Community College Advisory Team
- Metropolitan Community College Advisory Team
- Voices for Children Health Team
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
- Nebraska Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Together for Kids and Families
- Human Resources Federation
- Community Services Initiative
- 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. In addition to attending conference, flyers and information were sent to many locations.

Staff served as a part of the planning team for Early Connections, a state-wide conference held in Kearney, and for the First Annual Conference for Spanish Speaking child care providers, held in Omaha.

**"If you don't stand up for children,
you don't stand up for much."**

Marian Wright Edelman

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 2005 recipients were Helen Raikes and Kathy Zadina. They were recognized at the Early Connections Conference in Kearney.



Kathy Zadina has been an exemplary leader for NeAEYC, the early childhood profession, young children and families. She developed the concept of the Thumbprint's Quilt to promote early childhood awareness. She has provided leadership in the Columbus area in an effort to work with businesses on the importance of early childhood care and education. She has continued her own professional development by attending UNO and earning an advanced degree.

Helen Raikes has been a long-time member of the NeAEYC, and a tireless advocate on behalf of causes affecting young children and their families. Following are a few of the recent projects she has initiated or worked with closely:



- Pilot Quality Rating Systems;
- QUINCE Project, a random assignment intervention to test intensive consultation models in family childcare;
- Nebraska Coalition for Early Childhood Education, an initiative to bring more resources to early childhood education in Nebraska.

STAFF

The Association was able to hire a full time Office Manager this year. This has been an essential step in increasing the services. Additionally, six individuals were employed as part time contract labor for accounting support, a Quality Enhancement Pilot Project Mentor, Environment Ratings Evaluators, and Technical Support.

Full Time staff:

Linda Zinke
Executive Director

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

Patricia Hoffschneider
Office Manager

OFFICE SPACE

The Association was able to move to larger space this year. This has allowed us to have a work room and provided space for the part time Accountant, the contract labor for the Quality Enhancement Pilot Project, and a small meeting room.

The new space is in the lower level, and was available at a lower cost per square foot, making this move financially possible.

MIDWEST AEYC CONFERENCE

The NeAEYC is hosting the Midwest AEYC Conference in April, 2006. It will be held at the Qwest Center in Omaha, and the projected attendance is 1,200 - 1,400. A pre-conference will be held on Thursday, April 27. The conference is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 28 & 29.

A conference of this size requires much planning and a team has been meeting through the year.

Pre-conference sessions will be presented by:

- Dr. Carolyn Edwards & Dr. George Forman,
- Dr. Charles Smith, and
- Jane Kitson.

Roger & Bonnie Neugebauer, Editors of Child Care Exchange; and **Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik**, Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences at UNL will be keynote speakers on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

Several presenters have been identified as "featured" speakers, and over 80 breakout sessions have been planned.

A special exhibit, ***The Power of Documentation: Children's Learning Revealed***, will also be available.

Tours to child care facilities, Girls and Boys Town, Village Pointe, and Nature's Classroom in Nebraska City have been planned.

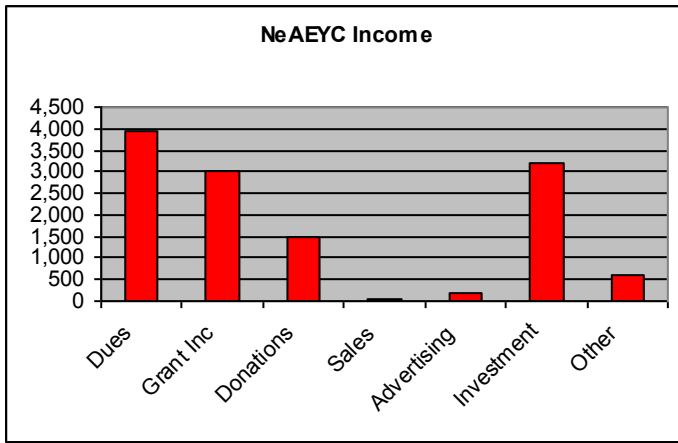
We anticipate 50+ vendors to be available for the conference.

NeAEYC officially began in Nebraska in 1976. A birthday party, recognizing 30 of years efforts to strengthen and support the early childhood community, will also be held during the conference.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This past year, the Association gathered additional funds through our direct mail campaign, board donations, a grant from the NAEYC for Technical Needs, and a grant from the Susan A. Buffett Foundation.

Over \$8,000 in additional funds were donated to support NeAEYC activities.



ACCREDITATION

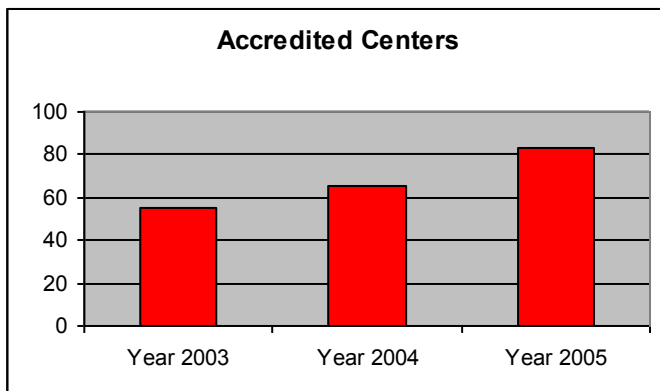
The NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation administers a national, voluntary, and professionally sponsored accreditation system to help raise the quality of preschools, kindergartens, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. It provides a process through which early childhood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

The Accreditation Process is being restructured, with goals to provide more timely service and professional validators.

In Nebraska the Accreditation Project is funded through the Nebraska Department of Education and administered by the Nebraska AEYC. It provides centers with an opportunity to apply for funds to help with the self study costs, notification of intent process, and validation visit fees that exceed \$75.00.

As of December 31, 2005, there were 83 accredited centers in Nebraska. The project provided funds for self-study materials for 11 programs, funds for validation visits for 27 programs, and funds for the Notification of Intent process for 19 programs.

Centers supported were in Lincoln, Kearney, McCook, Stella, Omaha, Red Cloud, Blue Hill, Silver Lake, David City, Alliance, Lexington, Gering, Sidney, and North Platte.



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® NEBRASKA has completed its fourth 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Scholarship participants must be working in a licensed child care facility. The participants live in 41 counties across Nebraska.

T.E.A.C.H. participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds. 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.

SPANISH SPEAKING PROVIDERS

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.

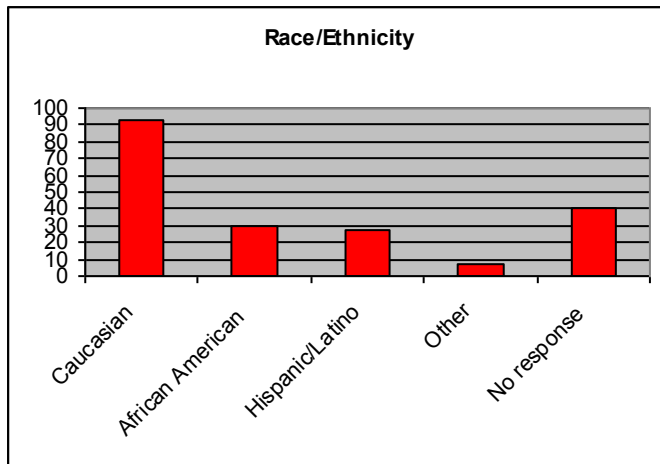
Through a collaborative effort, six early childhood college credit courses in Spanish are being provided at Metropolitan Community College:

- Children's Health & Nutrition - 4.5
- Observation, Assessment & Guidance - 4.5
- Infant/Toddler Development - 4.5
- Preschool Development - 3
- Early Language & Literacy - 4.5
- Infant/Toddler Practicum - 3

12-15 students have been participating in the classes.

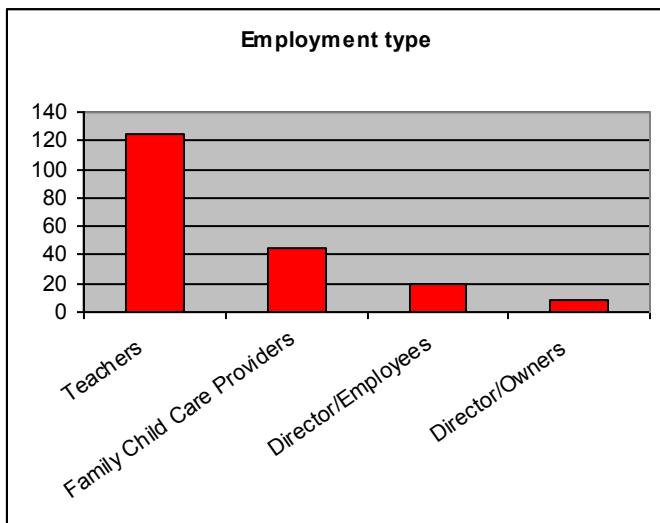
RACE/ETHNICITY

32% of the T.E.A.C.H. scholars are from minority backgrounds.



EMPLOYMENT TYPE

The following graph shows the employment type of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA participants.



“My T.E.A.C.H. teachers are motivated learners. It has given my staff new teaching techniques that continue to improve the quality we offer our students.”

Lancaster County Center

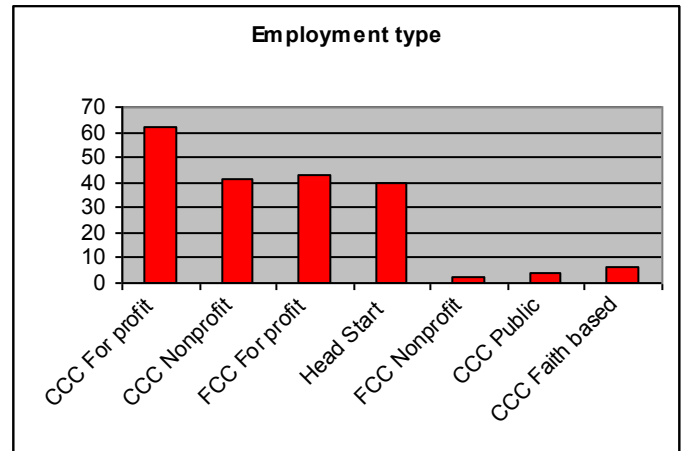
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Many low income families rely on child care subsidy funds so they can work and pay their child care costs. State-wide, 55% of the centers and homes accept child care subsidy.

In comparison, 82% of the responding sponsoring child care centers and family child care homes participating in T.E.A.C.H. accept child care subsidy.

PROGRAM TYPE

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



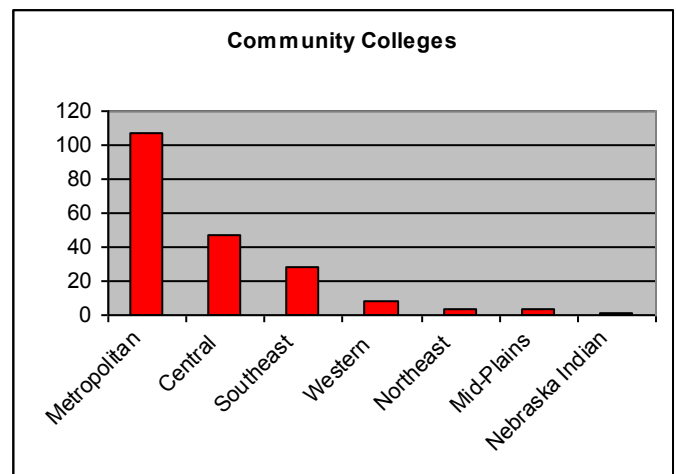
CCC - Child Care Center * FCC - Family Child Care

“I would have never been able to go to school without it. I feel so fulfilled and at 48 years, I am finally able to do what I only dreamt about before and did it with straight A’s!”

Douglas County Teacher

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 1,664 credits.

For reporting and data purposes, all quarter credits have been converted to semester credits.

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 fills in gaps in support. During this past year, 20 participants accessed Pell Grants or other funding sources, supplementing resources for 171 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% from their sponsoring centers.

- Sponsoring centers elected to provide a bonus for 57.6% of the teachers and a raise for 42.4%.
- Sponsoring centers opted to provide a raise for 31.6% of the Director/Employees, and a bonus for 68.4%

Low wages is one of the primary reasons for turnover in early childhood. Data from the Midwest Child Care Study indicated that the average salary is \$7.07 per hour.

During this past year, the average salary increase for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] NEBRASKA scholars was 11.9%.

CONTINUITY

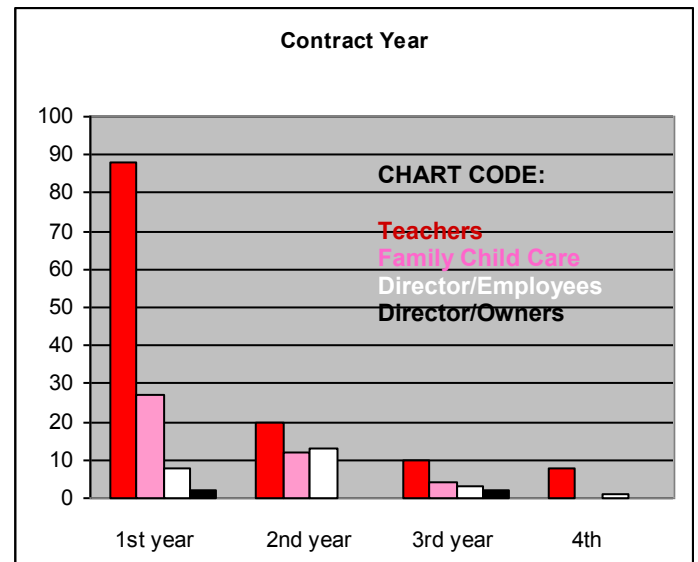
The T.E.A.C.H. contract requires that the participants remain at their current place of employment for an additional year following the completion of their contract. Many students opt to renew their contract, and continue working toward their two-year degree.

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

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

CONTRACT RENEWAL

The chart reflecting the contract renewal information includes the information from the beginning of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] NEBRASKA project in the summer of 2002.



“I will be the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. Thank you for providing this opportunity and supporting me throughout.”

Valley County T.E.A.C.H. Director/Employee

BACHELOR'S DEGREE OPTION

A new option was added to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] NEBRASKA models this year, the Bachelor's Degree option. This option is available to students able to enter a Nebraska university as a junior in the field of early childhood.

In addition to taking 9-15 credits, students agree to remain at their sponsoring center for 18 months, and must already have been employed at that center or as a family child care home provider for at least one year.

Eleven students enrolled in the first BA option; ten at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and one at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

They registered for 36 credits.

This option will be expanded to serve 30 students by the fall, 2006 semester.

“Thanks for working on the BA pilot so those grads can continue! T.E.A.C.H. is becoming increasingly important to Head Start as funding cuts happen.”

Sherman County Center

T.E.A.C.H. 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. 23% of the student surveys were returned. Here are some of the highlights:

- 88% said they intended to continue their education the following year.
- 80% of those not planning to continue their education, plan to graduate.
- 93% said they have used what they have learned in the classroom with the children.
- 81% said they have shared what they have learned with other staff.
- 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. 43% of these surveys were returned. When asked how the increased education has impacted their center:

- 100% agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the recipient has improved the quality of the teaching techniques and practice
- 95% 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.
- 100% agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the recipient has increased enthusiasm in the classroom.

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:

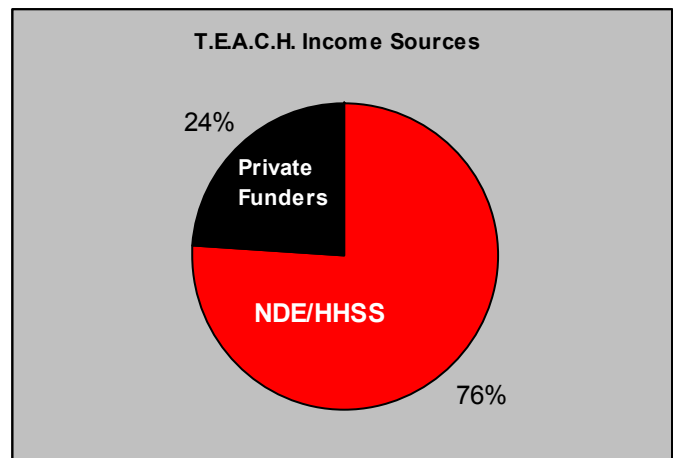
- Marcia Corr, Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln
- Sue Jensen, Health & Human Service Systems-Child Care Licensing, Grand Island
- Chris Kline, First National Bank, Omaha
- Marjorie Kostelnik, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Diane Lewis, Health & Human Service Systems, Lincoln
- Betty Medinger, Health & Human Service Systems, Lincoln
- Betty Redleaf, Little Priest Tribal College, Winnebago
- Terry Rohren, Early Childhood Training Center, Omaha
- 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
- Roxanne Vipond, Resource & Referral, Grand Island

T.E.A.C.H. 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 Child Care Grant Funds.

Additional funding was available 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.



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PILOT PROJECT

We began a new project this year, the QEPP. This project uses the information from the Environment Ratings Scales and provides a coach/mentor for some of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA recipients.

The Environment Ratings Scales provide an objective assessment of classrooms and family child care facilities, and generate results in eight areas. The Ratings Scales are completed by trained evaluators.

The coach meets with the family child care provider or teacher (and director) about the results of the scales and together they develop a plan to work toward quality. A limited amount of funds are provided for supplies and/or training. The coach will have contact with each of the individuals three times a year.

Participants are from the Omaha, Lincoln, and central Nebraska areas.

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