

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN, INC

The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. is a state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It began in 1976 and is organized as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation and led by a Board of Directors. Membership is open to anyone interested in supporting and promoting the mission of the organization. The membership fee includes membership in the local, state, regional, and national AEYC organization.

NeAEYC provides the following services and projects:

PROJECTS

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA
- Accreditation Facilitation Project
- Quality Enhancement Pilot Project
- Nature Explore Project

MEMBERSHIP

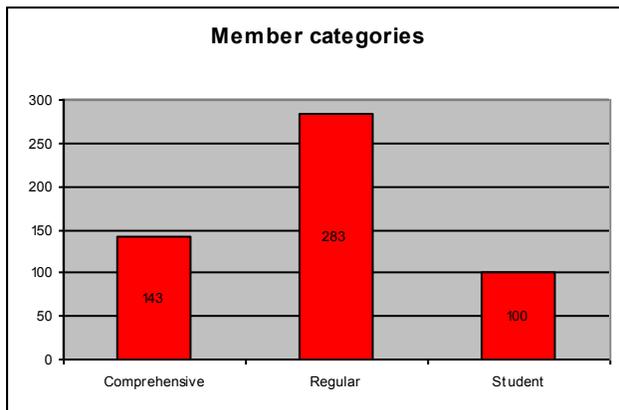
The membership of the NeAEYC is organized as follows (At-large members do not belong to a local chapter):

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

Five local chapters of the Nebraska AEYC:

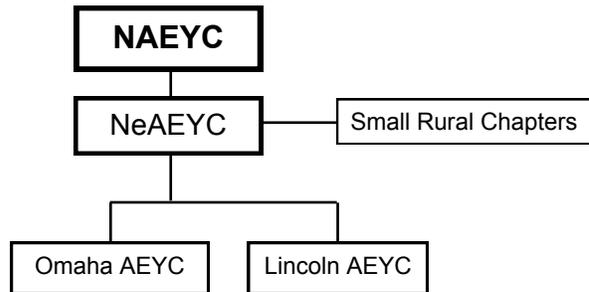
- Northeast Chapter of the NeAEYC
4 counties - includes a student chapter at Wayne State
- Columbus Chapter of the NeAEYC
6 counties
- All Nations Chapter of the NeAEYC
3 counties
- Sarpy-Cass Chapter of the NeAEYC
2 counties
- Kearney area Chapter of the NeAEYC
1 county
- At-large membership



SERVICES

- State website—NebraskAEYC.org
- National website—NAEYC.org
- Conferences and conference support
- Statewide planning retreat
- Advocacy & Public awareness
- Staff support
- Chapter development and support
- Week of the Young Child activities
- Mini-grants for Week of the Young Child
- Professional Insurance option
- Young Children Journal

NeAEYC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

The Nebraska AEYC Affiliate Chapter officially began in 1976.

A celebration was held at the Midwest AEYC 2006 Conference.

NEWSLETTER

The Nebraska AEYC newsletter is printed and distributed 4 times a year—96% of the survey respondents think this is “just right”.

Survey data consistently indicates that members prefer to receive the newsletter in the mail.

A number of changes and improvements were made to the newsletter this past year.

2006 MIDWEST AEYC CONFERENCE

The 2006 Midwest AEYC Conference was held in Omaha at the Qwest Center. The pre-conference was held on April 27, with the conference on April 28-29, 2006. The event was highly successful, and registration exceeded the projections.

All 3 sessions of the pre-conference were filled to capacity. 90% of the registrations were Early Bird registrations.

The conference registrations exceeded our expectations. 91% of the one-day registrations were Early Bird, and 86% of the two-day registrations were Early Bird.

- Over 80 speakers shared their expertise and information
- 141 conference goers participated in 5 tours.
- 53 exhibitors showcased their products or services.
- The Power of Documentation Exhibit was a big hit.

| PRECONFERENCE | PROJECTED | ACTUAL |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| G. Forman/C. Edwards | 60 | 80 |
| C. Smith | 60 | 79 |
| J. Kitson | 90 | 98 |
| | | |
| Totals | 210 | 257 |

| CONFERENCE | PROJECTED | ACTUAL |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Friday OR Saturday | 410 | 511 |
| Friday AND Saturday | 530 | 738 |
| | | |
| Totals | 940 | 1,249 |

MORE STATISTICS

- 18 states were represented
- 266 students attended
- About half of the conference participants were members of AEYC.

Quotes from the conference

"Registration was quick & easy".

"Motivated me to enjoy my job!"

"Sessions were geared for many levels (good variety)."

"Good location - everything in one place."

"The vendors were very helpful and had good selections."

"I felt the day was very well organized, staff, volunteers, presenters - were very friendly."

We are special people! My first conference, a great time and wonderful opportunity to meet other people in our field."

"Please do not stop these conferences!"

NEBRASKA AEYC PLANNING TEAM

A dedicated planning team worked for 18 months on conference planning:

Gina DeFreece Co-chair, Hospitality Committee

Pam Dolberg Co-chair, Hospitality Committee

Trudy Dvorak Data Support

Tracy Gordon Co-chair, Exhibits Committee

Pat Hoffschneider Technical Coordinator

Jessica LaChere Co-chair, Hospitality Committee

Brandee Lengel Co-chair, Exhibits Committee

Linda Meyers Technical Assistance

Terry Rohren Conference Co-Coordinator

Nancy Rosenow Chair, PR/Fundraising Committee

Michelle Rupiper Conference Chair & Co-chair, Program Committee

Kathy Zadina Co-chair, Program Committee

Linda Zinke Conference Co-Coordinator

"Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least."

Goethe

RECOGNITION

Brandee Lengel, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Coordinator, was presented the **Honored Graduate Award** from Southeast Community College.



This award is given to graduates that have demonstrated professional excellence in their field of student. Brandee's field of study was Early Childhood Education.

The award was presented at ceremonies at Southeast Community College.

Michelle Rupiper, past President of Nebraska AEYC and current president of Midwest AEYC was the recipient of the **Shirley Dean Catalyst for Change Award**.



This award honors a person who has provided outstanding leadership and service to the early childhood profession.

Dr. Rupiper, director of the Ruth Staples Lab School at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, was recognized at the Midwest 2006 Conference in Omaha.

Marcia Corr was the 2006 recipient of the Nebraska AEYC's **Distinguished Service to Children Award**.



This award recognizes a person who has contributed outstanding service to the organization.

Ms. Corr has a long and notable career serving Nebraska's children and families and currently is serving as the Administrator of the Office of Early Childhood at the Nebraska Department of

Education. Ms. Corr was recognized at the Midwest 2006 Conference.

Linda Zinke, Executive Director of Nebraska AEYC, was the recipient of the **Sally Wysong Award**.



Each year, the Lincoln AEYC presents the Sally Wysong award to a professional who provides outstanding services to the children of Lincoln and their families.

Ms. Zinke has over 25 years of experience and dedication to the early childhood field.

The award was presented at the Early Childhood Celebration at the Nebraska State Fairgrounds.

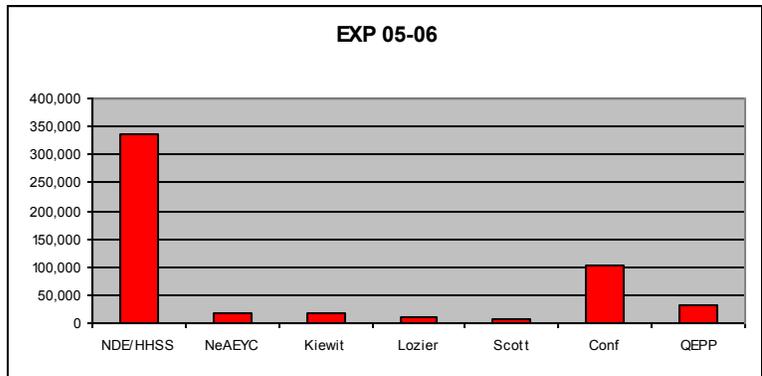
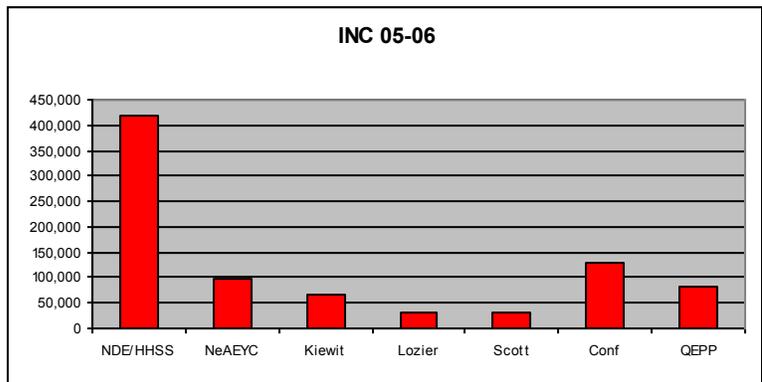
NEW PROJECTS

The project from the conference and other endeavors allowed Ne-AEYC to begin new projects in October, 2006:

- The Accreditation Facilitation Project
- Week of the Young Child mini-grant
- Nature Explore Project

***“Far and away
the best prize that life offers
is the chance to work hard
at work worth doing.”***

Theodore Roosevelt



PLANNING RETREAT

The 5th annual NeAEYC planning retreat was held in June at Mahoney State Park. _____ early childhood stakeholders participated. Strategies were developed in three areas:

Growing T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA:

Goals included increasing access & reducing barriers to 4-year colleges, additional practicum options, bringing T.E.A.C.H. to unserved and underserved populations

NeAEYC support and development:

Goals included increasing members through target populations, partnering with like-minded or organizations, and identifying and implementing leadership opportunities

Public Policy and Advocacy:

Goals included gathering long term data regarding kindergarten readiness & all EC public policies in NE, a study of the education systems in NE, establishment of a state-wide advocacy structure to support EC initiatives

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD ACTIVITIES AND MINI-GRANTS

Governor Dave Heineman signed a proclamation proclaiming April 3-10, 2006 as The Week of the Young Child. This event has been sponsored for many years by the National AEYC, and provides an opportunity to recognize the early childhood field.

WOYC events were held throughout the state.

The Nebraska AEYC will be providing \$250 mini-grants. These will be for chapters to use to promote early childhood in conjunction with the Week of the Young Children in April, 2007. The first grants will be distributed in February, 2007.

This project will be funded with part of the profit from the Midwest 2006 Conference.

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Health and Human Services Systems, Nebraska Children & Families, United Way of Omaha, and the Nebraska AEYC joined together to contract the development of an Economic Impact Study.

The reports is expected in early spring, 2007.

WEBSITE

The traffic to the Nebraska AEYC website was especially heavy this year, in large part due to the 2006 conference.

“If you love what you do, you will never work another day in your life.”

Confucius

NETWORKING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Nebraska AEYC staff participated in the following teams and committees:

- Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council
- Economic Impact Study Team
- 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
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
- Human Resources Federation
- Community Services Initiative
- Together for Kids and Families
- Quality Ratings System Planning team
- Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Child Abuse Training Team

The www.NebraskaAEYC.org website had nearly 50,000 hits in March of 2006, a record high.

| | March-03 | March-04 | March-05 | March-06 |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| TOTAL HITS | 2,765 | 4,223 | 6,488 | 49,710 |

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

Studies of quality early childhood care and education programs indicate the best programs are those where staff are well educated and turnover is low.

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) is designed to provide scholarship funds for those working with young children. The scholarships address three key issues facing those in the early care and education field: the educational level of the staff, high turnover rates, and low wages. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® has been very successful, and is currently in over 20 states, including Nebraska.

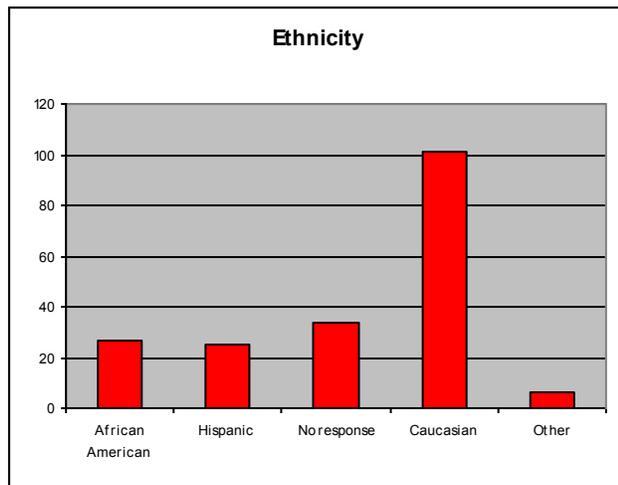
The project has four primary components:

- Education—improving the education level of those caring for the children,
- Scholarship—funds to support the costs of education,
- Compensation—increased compensation through a bonus from the project and a bonus or raise from their center
- Continuity—T.E.A.C.H. participants agree to remain at their current employment for additional time, thus reducing turnover.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2006 T.E.A.C.H. participants live in **40** counties across Nebraska.

We reach out to all populations that can benefit from this project. In 2006, 30% of the T.E.A.C.H. participants were of minority background.



*“Please think of the children **first**. If you ever have anything to do with their entertainment, their food, their toys, their custody, their day or night care, their health care, their education - listen to the children, learn about them, learn from them.*

Think of the children first.”

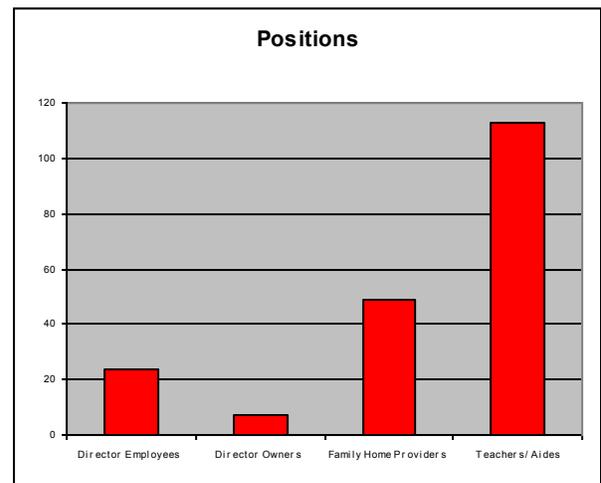
Mr. Rogers

“If the American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.”

Pearl S. Buck

EMPLOYMENT TYPE

Scholars can be teachers, teacher aides, family child care home providers, director/employees or director/owners. They must be working in a licensed facility or public school, at least 30 hours a week.



CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

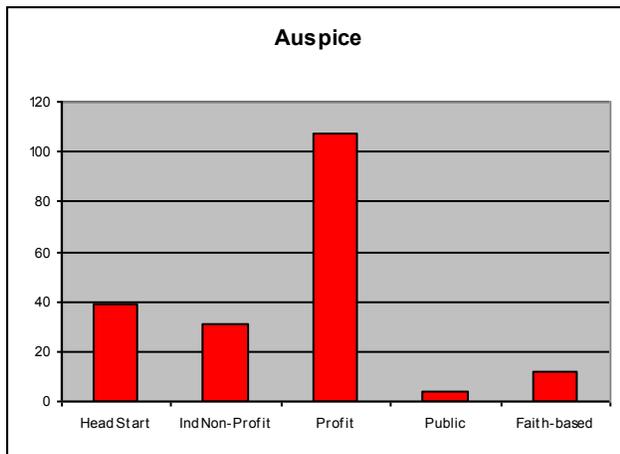
88% of the T.E.A.C.H. participants responded when asked if they accepted child care subsidy. Of these, **85% indicated that they accept** child care subsidy. This is an important factor for low income families, and is invaluable for their continued employment.

State-wide, 55% of all centers or child care homes accept subsidy.

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

PROGRAM TYPE

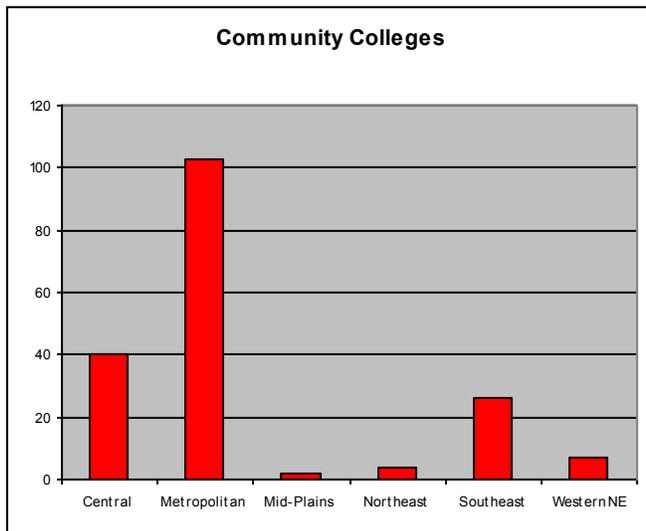
This project is available to the early childhood community on a broad scale. Recipients work in facilities that are for profit, nonprofit, private, public, faith based, and Head Start programs.



EDUCATION

One of the four components of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood is Education. In the Associate's Degree model, participants earn credits at community colleges and work toward their two-degree in early childhood or child development. They are required to successfully complete 12-18 quarter credits or 9-12 semester credits within a 12 month period. Their grade average must be at least a C to complete their contract.

Students attend the following community colleges:



During this period, the students have earned 1,321.25 AA credits

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

SCHOLARSHIP

The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship 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. The remaining 20% is paid by the centers and the students.

T.E.A.C.H. fills in gaps when other funding sources are available. This year education funds were available from a Central community College grant and a grant through the University of Nebraska at Kearney in addition to Pell Grant funds.

Other resources paid for 159 AA credits and 41 BA credits during 2006.

The grade point average for the students during 2006 was _____

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 raise for 51% of the teachers and a bonus for 49%. The centers opted to provide a raise for 17% of the Director/employees and a bonus for 83%.

The average salary for the center staff with more than one contract completed is \$10.10.

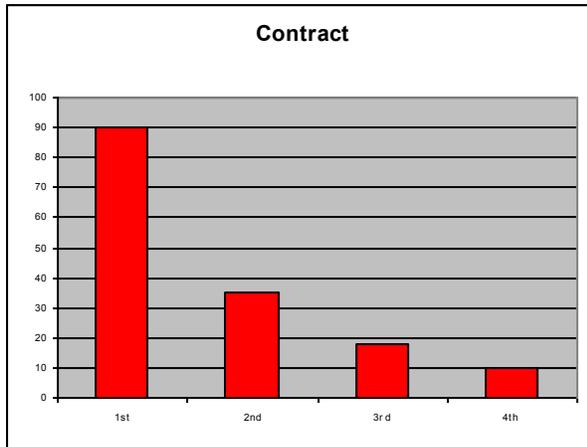
Data from the Midwest Child Care Study indicated that the average salary in Nebraska is \$7.07 per hour.

The average salary increase for the center staff for 2006 was 12.51%.

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

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 contract completion. Most students renew their contract and continue their education.



For a variety of reasons, 40 students discontinued their contract:

- 11 decided to wait to begin their education
- 6 graduated
- 4 completed a contract but did not renew
- 13 did not fulfill the employment requirements
- 6 did not complete other requirements.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE OPTION

Twelve students participated in the BA option during this year. Eleven attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney and one attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Barriers to expansion include:

- Credits that don't transfer
- Limited articulation agreements, especially in the Omaha area.

We continue to work on this model, as the state is experiencing a need for more early childhood professionals with BA degrees.

These students have earned 85 credits during this year.

Quote from a Director:

"The students going to college have been so empowered. It is wonderful to see the growth professionally & personally."

T.E.A.C.H. SURVEY INFORMATION

Student Surveys:

As part of the evaluation process a survey regarding the effective of the project is distributed to all the recipients. 36% of the student surveys were returned. Their average years working in child care were 0 years & 2 months.

- All that responded said they have used what they learned in the classroom and have shared what they learned with other teachers.
- 98% were satisfied or very satisfied with the program & would recommend it to others.
- 81% said they would not have taken courses, or would have taken fewer courses without T.E.A.C.H..

Center Surveys:

A survey is also sent to each sponsoring center. A total of 21 surveys, or 40% were returned.

- 95% say their center staff has increased the early childhood knowledge,
- 95% say their staff has improved the quality of their teaching techniques.
- 100% of those responding plan to continue sponsoring T.E.A.C.H. recipients.
- 100% said the T.E.A.C.H. staff responded in a timely manner

Quotes from the scholars:

"I have been able to pursue a dream. This has given me both self-confidence and self esteem."

"The scholarship means that I can get an education and expand my knowledge of children, so I can do a better job at the career I love."

T.E.A.C.H. FUNDING

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA is funded primarily through a contract with the Nebraska Department of Education/Health and Human Services System. Additional funds have been provided by the Peter Kiewit Foundation, the William and Ruth Scott Foundation and the Lozier Foundation.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PILOT PROJECT (QEPP)

The Quality Enhancement Pilot Project uses the results of the Environment Ratings Scales (ERS) and the expertise of a coach/mentor to partner with centers and home providers in moving toward higher quality.

The Environment Ratings Scales are a nationally known and accepted tool used to evaluate quality in a variety of areas. This tool is available for infant/toddler settings (ITERS), early childhood settings (ECERS), and family home provider settings (FDCERS). The ratings scale assessments are completed by independent contractors.

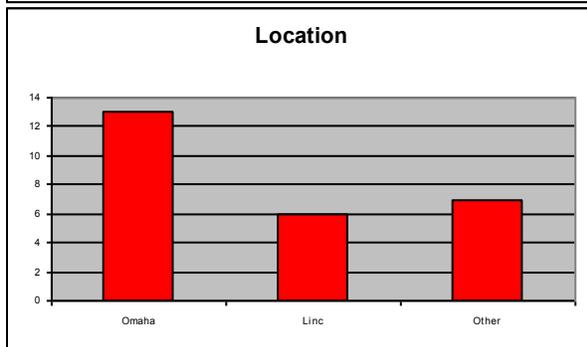
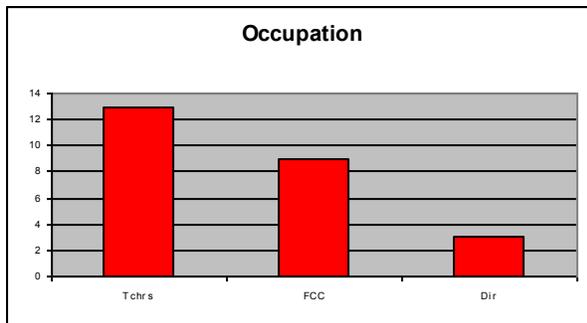
Steps of the QEPP:

- ERS completed
- Site visit by coach—plan developed
- Supplies, training provided
- 2nd site visit by coach
- 2nd ERS completed
- Results evaluated

Results from the second Environment Ratings scale consistently show significant improvement in the areas that have been addressed.

Areas most commonly addressed are:

- Space & furnishings
- Activities—art, music & movement, blocks, sand & water, dramatic play, math & numbers, and nature & science



ACCREDITATION FACILITATION PROJECT

NeAEYC began an accreditation project this summer. After many years, the National AEYC has restructured the Accreditation processes, resulting in many changes. The Nebraska AEYC Accreditation project was designed to provide support for those programs currently accredited, those programs that may have begun the accreditation process, and those programs that are interested in using the new Accreditation standards as a Quality Enhancement Tool. Priority will be given to the currently accredited programs.

The project provides

- opportunities for conference calls and networking,
- staff support,
- limited funds for supplies to meet accreditation requirements, and
- will be hosting a retreat.

This project is currently being funded through profits from the Midwest 2006 Conference.

It is coordinated with the Nebraska Department of Education and the funding resources they have available for accreditation costs.

At this time, over 100 programs in Nebraska are accredited.

NATURE EXPLORE PROJECT

The Nebraska AEYC participated in the World Forum on Nature in Nebraska City in October.

Following this event, the NeAEYC became a participating partner in a new project. Through this project, 8 pilot sites and 11 demonstration sites have been identified. A landscape architect will meet with these centers, schools, or family child care providers and work with them to develop a plan for their outdoor space. NeAEYC will be providing support and participating in the train the trainer events.

The pilot sites include public schools, private child care facilities, family home providers, a special needs facility, and Head Start programs.

TO JOIN

Membership is open to anyone interested in supporting early childhood. Interested people can join on line at NAEYC.org or can contact our office in Lincoln or get information at NebraskaAEYC.org