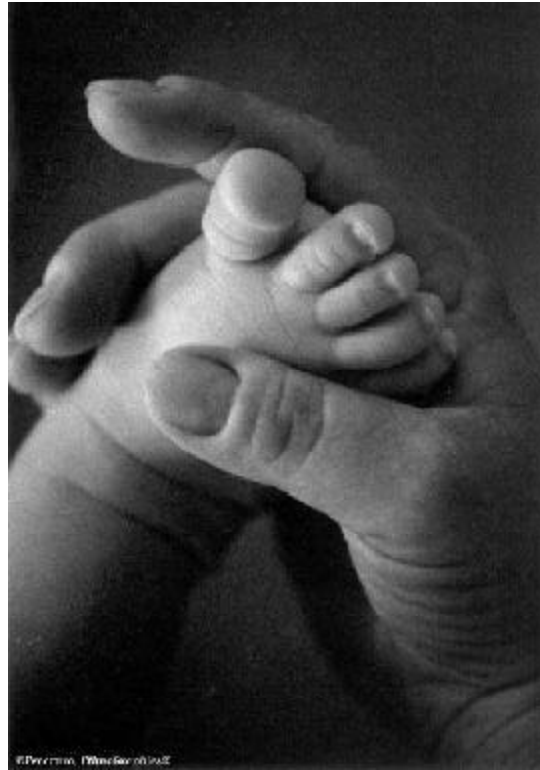


# 2002 Governor's Status Report



## Executive Summary

### Early Intervention and Early Childhood Care and Education

This report was prepared by the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council

Linda Shafer, Chairperson

Publication Date: December 10, 2002

For more information contact: Susan Dahm, Nebraska Department of Education

The report was prepared with the assistance of staff from the  
Nebraska Department of Education and Health and Human Services System.

**Executive Summary**  
**Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council**  
**2002 Governor's Status Report**  
**Early Intervention and Early Childhood Care and Education**

**I. Introduction**

The Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council was created in 2000 to advise and assist the collaborating agencies in carrying out the provisions of the Early Intervention Act, the Quality Child Care Act, and other early childhood care and education initiatives under state supervision. This report was developed by the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council to illustrate the progress that has been made over the last two years in early intervention and early childhood care and education. The report is required by Nebraska Revised Statutes 43-3402.

**II. What is Working Well in Early Childhood in Nebraska**

**A. Services**

- Co-lead administration of the early intervention program
- Services coordination for infants/toddlers with disabilities
- Transition from early intervention to early childhood special education
- Public awareness efforts for early intervention
- Nebraska Respite Network
- Developmental TIPS (Tracking Infant Progress Statewide)
- Early intervention/early childhood special education service delivery
- Child care licensing
- Child care subsidy
- Rule 11 approved and in effect
- Early childhood programs funded through NDE
- Head Start and Early Head Start services
- Head Start State Collaboration Office

**B. Professional Development and Training**

- Early Childhood Training Center
- Regional Training Coalitions
- Early Childhood Conferences
- HeadsUp! Reading

- SpecialCare Training
- Personal Development Facilitator Institute (PDFI)
- Higher Education Initiatives
  - o Unified Endorsement
  - o SCRIPT (Support Change and Reform in Interdisciplinary Pre-Service Training)
  - o Natural Allies
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship Program

### **III. What Needs Refinement in Early Childhood in Nebraska**

#### **A. Services**

- Need to increase service delivery in natural and inclusive environments.
- Need to increase the availability of child care for children with special needs.
- Need additional early childhood respite care providers in rural areas.
- Need to provide easier access to information for parents about the availability of services to children and families.
- Need to increase the availability of tele-health services.
- Need to increase mental health services for young children.
- Need to improve quality through child care licensing and child care subsidy systems.
- Need to increase the availability of infant/toddler care.
- Need to encourage pre-literacy skills in young children in more early childhood programs.
- Need to reduce the high turnover rates among child care teachers.
- Need to examine basing child care reimbursement off daily attendance rather than enrollment.

#### **B. Professional Development and Training**

- Need additional training for child care providers on serving children with disabilities.
- Need additional training on low incidence disabilities.
- Need to increase the educational pre-requisites for early childhood professionals.
- Need more consistency in the quality of child care professional development programs.

## **IV. What Needs Improvement to Address Gaps, Barriers, and Concerns in Nebraska**

### **A. Services**

- Need to increase the number of dentists serving Medicaid participants.
- Need to increase the capacity of programs to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity of young children and their families.
- Need to develop a mechanism to track the service professional gap in rural areas.
- Need to continue to focus on family-friendly professional service system.
- Need to develop consistent transportation regulations for young children across agencies.
- Need to implement business and community incentives for child care.
- Need parents to have access to information on licensed child care programs and indicators of quality care.
- Need to increase child care wages.
- Need to establish more incentives in the state subsidy system to improve the quality of care.
- Need to address the shortage of nurses.
- Need to identify a medical home for all young children.

### **B. Professional Development and Training**

- Need additional training and cross training to serve all children ages birth to five.
- Need to encourage directors of child care centers to hold a degree in early childhood education.
- Need to maintain strong personnel preparation programs as SCRIPT funding ends.
- Need to provide more training on early childhood mental health.

## **V. Emerging Issues in Early Childhood Care and Education**

### **A. Federal Issues**

Several key pieces of federal legislation have direct impact on the early childhood field. Congress is expected to act on most of these pieces of legislation in 2002-2003. Federal legislation to watch are:

- TANF(Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) Reauthorization
- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Reauthorization
- CCDF (Child Care Development Fund) Reauthorization
- Head Start Reauthorization

The *No Child Left Behind Act* passed in 2002 calls for reform to assure that public schools are teaching students what they need to know to be successful in life. The implementation of portions of this act will impact various aspects of early childhood care. *Good Start, Grow Smart* will address three major areas of early childhood education:

- Strengthening Head Start
- Partnerships with states to improve early childhood education
- Providing information to teachers, caregivers, and parents on best research in early childhood education.

## **B. State Issues**

- State fiscal resources will continue to be an issue for Nebraska. The 2003 legislative sessions will need to address a budget shortfall estimated to be more the \$600 million for the biennium. The ECICC recognizes that any new initiatives that require significant new dollars are not likely to be initiated in the current state economy.

## **VI. Next Steps for the ECICC**

The ECICC has established one standing committee and two task forces to further review and consider some of the issues discussed in this report. The committees will review and study issues according to the charters established by the ECICC and bring proposed recommendations to the full Council for review and approval. Once approved, the recommendations will be forwarded to the Governor, the Legislature and the state agencies for consideration.

The three committees are:

- : Gaps and Barriers Standing Committee: The committee will focus on the needs of children with disabilities but will also encompass gaps and barriers for all young children.
- : Public Awareness Strategy Task Force: The task force will identify and examine current public awareness practices in early childhood services, and make recommendations that will enhance early childhood public awareness in Nebraska.
- : Quality Child Care and Worthy Wage Task Force: The task force is established to collect and analyze data, and develop recommendations on ways the state can improve the quality of care and education for all young children in Nebraska.