



NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (ECICC) 2012 STRATEGIC REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR ON THE STATUS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

The Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council was created to advise and assist the collaborating agencies in carrying out the provisions of the Early Intervention Act, the Quality Child Care Act, Sections 79-1101 to 79-1104, and other early childhood care and education initiatives under state supervision [Section 43-3401, Neb. Rev. Stat.], and Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The ECICC is also identified by the governor as the State Early Learning Council to meet the federal requirements of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act [December 2007, PL110-134]. A biennial report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood is required by the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council Act. This abbreviated version serves as the Executive Summary of the Report.

Foundations of Early Childhood Work:

Today's young children are tomorrow's business leaders, policymakers, and parents. Capable children are the basis of a prosperous and sustainable society. Our future prosperity starts with children's success.

Foundations of our work:

- ❖ Brain architecture-Like a house is built from the bottom up, step by step. As it emerges, the quality of the architecture establishes either a sturdy or fragile foundation for all the development and behavior that follows.
- ❖ Interactions-Child development relies on the process of relationships-the interactions that children have every day with caregivers at home and in their community can either promote development or delay development.
- ❖ Toxic Stress-Stressors like chronic poverty and violence in the home and community damage the wiring of young brains.
- ❖ Getting it Right Early-Early childhood is a complicated time when cognitive social and emotional development is tightly connected in young children. Learning, behavior and physical and mental health are tied to this development. Getting things right the first time is easier and less costly than trying to fix them later.



ECICC's Strategic Plan

The ECICC's Strategic Plan was developed in Partnership with Together for Kids and Families, an Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems initiative implemented by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Lifespan Health, and membership across state agencies and local programs. This plan encompasses four goals and twelve strategies.

Goals:

- Early Care and Education in Nebraska is high quality, developmentally appropriate and accessible to all children.
- All Nebraska children have access to a dental/medical home and receive high quality health services.
- The early childhood social, emotional and behavioral health needs of Nebraska's children are met.
- Nebraska families support their children's optimal development by providing safe, healthy, and nurturing environments.

Strategies:

- Implement the dental/medical home as a standard of care.
- Establish the infrastructure to support a comprehensive system promoting access to oral health services including preventive oral health care.
- Promote and support evidence-based home visitation services for families with young children
- Promote integration of parent-to-parent peer support systems, when appropriate, into programs and services for families.
- Increase access to respite services to meet the needs of families.
- Coordinate statewide systems for sharing comprehensive information with families.
- Through a mixed delivery system, provide access to voluntary, high quality, early childhood education and care programs and services that meet the needs of all young children and their families.



- Develop and refine a system of support to improve the quality and effectiveness of early childhood education and care programs and services.
- Develop early childhood health and safety communication network(s).
- Disseminate data-driven and evidence-based training and material resources to improve health and safety in child care.
- Assist communities to develop/enhance an effective system of care to support the social, emotional and behavioral health needs of Nebraska's young children.
- Build the capacity of individuals who interact with young children to support social, emotional and behavioral health.

2012 Recommendations from the ECICC

In conjunction with and consideration of the Strategic Plan, the Council has also selected the following recommendations to including in the 2012 Status Report to the Governor.

Parent Education and Family Support

1. Fund and support community capacity building for parent education and family support.
2. Promote increased resources and coordination to provide information and support to all families with young children to assist parents in their role as a child's first teacher.
3. Fully fund the child care subsidy system to support families in the workforce by moving the income eligibility rate to 185% of poverty.

Social-Emotional Development/Mental Health

4. Ensure that all children from birth through age 8 are screened for social-emotional development delays.
5. Provide support that promotes young children's positive social and emotional development in all early childhood settings.
6. Increase the number of trained professionals available to support young children's social and emotional development.
7. Support Mental Health Consultation for children birth through age 8 by targeting prevention funds and expanded partnerships with regional behavioral health systems.

Early Care and Education

8. Sustain and expand the availability of quality early childhood care and education settings through Nebraska's Early Childhood Education Grant Program and Early Childhood Education Endowment Fund Program (Sixpence Programs) in collaboration and coordination with community programs including Head Start and Early Head Start.
9. Promote physical activity and healthy nutrition practices in all early care and education settings.
10. Develop increased accountability for early care and education programs that receive federal/state funding in early care and education.
11. Continue to promote inclusive practices for children with special needs in all early childhood care and education programs, school districts, and before and after school programs.

Medical and Dental Home and Health Services

12. Increase the number of dentists serving young children and families in a dental health care home that provides regular routine dental care and education and recommendations for any special dental health care the child might need.
13. Support, promote and expand a medical home approach to ensure continuity of health services for all young children and their families.
14. Focus outreach to eligible families and health providers to improve EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening and Diagnostic Testing) utilization rates.

