



Postdoctoral Fellowship in Early Childhood Research

Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research/ Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools

Background to and Purpose of Fellowship

The Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research (NAECR) and the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in partnership with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, are pleased to offer a two-year post-doctoral research fellowship beginning on or around June 1, 2017. The fellowship is part of the Institute for Educational Sciences-funded Early Learning Network, a collective group of research and assessment teams located at six universities and research centers across the country. The *Early Learning Network* seeks to advance the understanding of policies and practices that narrow the achievement gap and maintain early learning success as children transition from preschool to elementary school and beyond.

The purpose of the fellowship is to prepare early childhood education researchers to collaborate in and conduct high-quality, rigorous research that advances the knowledge base in ways that inform early childhood policy and practice. At the conclusion of the fellowship, it is expected that the research fellow will have established a line of practice- and policy-relevant research targeting young children placed at risk, the identification of malleable protective factors, and efforts to close the achievement gap.

Brief Description of Fellowship

Throughout the two-year fellowship, the fellow will be involved in research investigating the implementation of early learning policies and programs, malleable factors associated with early achievement, and transitions from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 3. The fellow will become an integral team member on UNL's Network project, *Learning Frontiers: PreK to Grade 3*, assessing learning environments and children's early trajectories across the state of Nebraska, including urban and rural communities. Exposure to many other research programs within NAECR and CYFS is also available.

Training of fellows will occur in the context of a program that provides (a) mentorship in professional development, independent writing, and grant development; (b) immersion in large-scale, federally-funded early childhood interdisciplinary research; and (c) didactic research training in methodology and early childhood. Over the two-year fellowship, fellows are expected to pursue individual research interests and develop associated, independent research studies culminating in publications and presentations. An Individualized Development Plan with benchmarks and products (e.g., publications, grant projects, presentations) will be constructed with the fellow within the first month of residence.

The fellow will be part of the Network Early Career Enhancement (NECE) program, comprised of other Network fellows across the country. The NECE program will provide organized opportunities for fellows across projects to engage in supported dialogue about Network research and independent research agendas, grant-writing and execution, interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional roles and responsibilities, publishing and other forms of dissemination, and a host of other topics relevant to early career researchers.

Research and Social Environment

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is the flagship institution of the four-campus University of Nebraska system and home to 26,000 students from more than 135 countries. CYFS, a UNL Program of Excellence, is a highly collaborative, interdisciplinary research Center that is home to a plethora of funded research studies spanning early education and development, psychosocial development and behavioral health, academic intervention and learning, rural education research, and research and evaluation methods. It houses several core supports for the purpose of identifying, developing, and executing grant-funded projects, all of which are fully available to post-doctoral fellows. It is home to the Nebraska Academy for Measurement, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP Academy), inclusive of PhD and Master’s level methodologists with extensive experience in statistical methods, quantitative research design methodology, qualitative and mixed methods, psychometrics, measurement, and evaluation. The project is conducted in close partnership with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI), one of four system-wide institutes whose goal is to transform early childhood development and education for children who are at risk due to poverty, family risk factors, and developmental delay. As one of four institutes in NU’s central administration, BECI has strong cross-university, cross-discipline and statewide connections, which will expand the resources and expertise available to the post-doctoral fellow.

UNL is located in Lincoln, Nebraska, a vibrant community of approximately 275,000 people that has many of the cultural benefits of a much larger city with the feel of a friendly small town. Lincoln boasts the most parkland per capita in the nation as well as an extensive bike trail network. Lincoln’s stable economy, moderate cost of living, low crime rates, growing diversity, world-class health care facilities, outstanding schools, and commitment to community are among the reasons it is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the Midwest. Notable entertainment and cultural opportunities can be found on and off campus in the downtown, Haymarket, and Railyard areas, and at the Pinnacle Bank Arena and the Lied Center for Performing Arts. It has been rated the #1 Happiest City, #1 Best Places to Find a Job, Top 10 Cities to Buy a Home, #4 Best Place to Raise a Family, #8 Most Affordable City, Top Ten Most Welcoming City, and one of the Cleanest U. S. Cities.

Qualifications and Application Procedures

Qualified applicants will have obtained a doctoral degree in psychology, educational psychology, special education, or a related field by approximately May 31, 2017. Applicants should maintain a basic understanding of research design and statistical analysis in the social and behavioral sciences, and evidence of research and scholarly potential. We are also interested in individuals with mixed-methods training and experience as well as an interest in pursuing this type of research.

The following application materials are required: (a) a cover letter describing professional research interests, research experience, methodological and statistical training, and professional development and research goals to be pursued during the fellowship; (b) a complete vita; and (c) two letters of recommendation (at least one from a faculty advisor or mentor). Application materials should be submitted by January 31, 2017 electronically to Dr. Susan Sheridan, Director of CYFS, ssheridan2@unl.edu. Questions can be directed to Dr. Sheridan at (402) 472-6941.

Review of applications will begin no earlier than February 1, 2017 and will continue until a suitable candidate is hired.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is committed to a pluralistic campus community through affirmative action, equal opportunity, work-life balance, and dual careers. See <http://www.unl.edu/equity/notice-nondiscrimination>.

