

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Job Overview

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is seeking applications from qualified individuals for the position of Associate Director of Professional Learning. This individual will oversee implementation of multi-modal professional learning initiatives that aim to promote quality, continuity, and equity in early care and education, birth through Grade 3.

The Associate Director of Professional Learning reports to the Director of Professional Learning and oversees implementation of the Institute's professional learning initiatives. This encompasses a wide variety of professional learning strategies that integrate work from the Institute's other units to enhance the knowledge, skills, and well-being of early childhood professionals while building the capacity of organizations that serve children and families. This individual will apply expertise in building partnerships, leadership, pedagogy, and adult learning to effectively disseminate research- and practice-based insights to stakeholders at all levels of the early childhood system. This role requires proactive collaboration with other Institute leaders and staff, as well as state and local agencies and organizations within metro Omaha and across Nebraska.

The goals of the professional learning unit are three-fold:

- To collaborate across Institute units and integrate research, program, and workforce initiatives by strengthening the role of implementation science in these units of the Institute and enhancing cross-disciplinary use of Institute-derived evidence and experience to change practice and build professional capacity.
- To develop, disseminate, and support the implementation of multi-modal methods designed to increase the capacities of schools and community-based programs that reduce and/or eliminate income- and race-based disparities in opportunity and social, cognitive, and academic outcomes among young children. These methods may include train-the-trainer, coaching, and other implementation strategies.
- Working with university, state, and national partners, to collaboratively lead initiatives that will increase the knowledge, skills, and well-being of the early childhood workforce and other professionals in Nebraska and beyond. In particular, develop strategic, capacity-building competence in the workforce in areas of teaching, learning, leadership, family partnerships, and community connections.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Profile

Envisioned as a new model for how public higher education is engaged in the first years of life, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (<https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu>) is a four-campus, university-wide, multidisciplinary research, education, outreach, and policy institute of the University of Nebraska committed to helping transform early childhood development and education in Nebraska and across the

nation.

The long-term goal of the Institute is to be a leading center where scholars, practitioners, community members, and policymakers collaborate to advance a unified approach that can improve the lives of young children and families and the systems that support them.

Applicants should note that the goals of the Institute are university-, state-, and nation-wide, but the location of the Institute administration is in Omaha. The position will work primarily out of the Omaha office. Regular hours at the Institute and for this position are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., with some evening and weekend assistance when events occur outside of normal work hours. This position will also require some travel.

Job Responsibilities

This job description is not to be considered an exhaustive or exclusive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. Employees may be required to perform other job-related duties as requested.

- In consultation with the Director of Professional Learning and other Institute leaders and staff, oversee implementation of strategic professional learning programs that incorporate multi-modal methods to increase the capacity of schools and community-based programs to reduce and/or eliminate income- and race-based gaps in early care and education. Methods may include workshops, webinars, communities of practice, training of trainers, coaching, and other innovative formats.
- Incorporate data from a variety of formal and informal sources to continuously improve professional learning content and processes.
- Design and lead implementation of the Institute’s knowledge management systems to identify, organize, and synthesize information from national birth–Grade 3 research and program/policy reports for materials of relevance to the Institute’s strategic goals.
- Collaborate with Institute leaders and staff to design and disseminate tools and resources that promote the implementation of effective practices for early care and education professionals.
- Work with Institute leaders and staff to determine needs, design, and facilitate internal professional learning activities.
- In partnership with the Workforce Development unit, create a network of relationships with early care and education professionals throughout the state to learn from them about their professional learning needs and design activities with them.
- In partnership with the Research and Evaluation unit, provide leadership for research practice partnership efforts and documentation of professional learning activities.
- Collaborate with external partners who lead other local and statewide professional learning initiatives to ensure that our work is strategic, aligned, and targeted to meet stakeholders’ needs.
- Engage with faculty and staff of the University of Nebraska to extend and enhance the work of the Professional Learning unit.
- Manage operations of the Professional Learning unit in support of director initiatives.

Required Qualifications

- Master’s degree
- Minimum of five years’ experience designing and facilitating professional development experiences for early childhood professionals

- Minimum of five years' experience working with children and/or families birth–Grade 3
- Minimum of five years' experience leading and/or coaching programs that support children and families in the first eight years of life
- Demonstrated experience identifying, analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating research-based knowledge using a variety of sources
- Demonstrated success working in settings that are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse
- Excellent oral and written communication skills with attention to detail

Preferred Qualifications

- Teacher certification
- Master's degree in education, child development, or social sciences
- Doctorate in early childhood education, educational leadership

Ideal candidates will demonstrate excellent independent judgment and analytical skills; strong interpersonal skills; a track record of timely completion of projects and the ability to responsibly manage competing priorities; success in collaboration and oversight of distributed resources and/or project teams; and commitment to the ideals of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, including equity, quality, and continuity.

An equivalent combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and abilities is acquired may be considered.

How to Apply

Application review begins immediately and continues until position is filled. Applications are processed through the online job posting at <https://careers.nebraska.edu>. Follow instructions to complete the Applicant Profile. Along with the application, attach a cover letter, vita, and contact information for three professional references. Salary commensurate with experience.

Direct questions about the position to: humanresources@nebraska.edu. Direct questions about the online application process to: (402) 472-3701. **The University of Nebraska is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and participates in E-Verify.**

ADDENDUM FOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Competencies

- Nature/Complexity of Work
This position requires an individual who possesses strong work ethic and sound judgment; ability to work with considerable independence, energy, and initiative in a complex day-to-day environment; ability to lead unit operations; strong attention to detail, accuracy, professional discretion, and sensitivity to confidential information; a record of effective collaboration; and excellent time management skills. Knowledge of the University of Nebraska's organizational structure and interrelationships among the campuses and internal and external constituencies is required.
- Problem Solving/Decision Making
Problem solving and appropriate decision making are required in every element of this position. Key duties involve independent judgment regarding analysis of issues and actions required to support

day-to-day business transactions. Actions are governed by broad objectives, professional ethics, university procedures and/or business acumen.

- **Strategic Input**
This individual is required to be proficient and conscientious when representing the Buffett Institute and the university. Administrative review is often necessary before information is released by this position, but the responsibility for error-free detail supporting analytical information rests with the employee. This role requires a strong sense of the requirements of a stable organization and its long-term needs, along with the ability to exercise significant initiative and creativity in developing new value-added relationships with the Institute's stakeholders. The role also requires someone who is mission-driven, is deeply committed to the values of the Institute, and seeks to advance the Institute and its goals.
- **Know-How**
This position demands the ability to be agile, entrepreneurial, operate independently, thrive in a fast-paced, multi-tasking environment, and exercise judgment to seek supervision and/or input from others when necessary. The candidate should demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills with a strong orientation toward diplomacy, tact, collaboration, and teamwork; exceptional verbal, writing, editing, and proofreading skills; attention to detail and accuracy; ability to prioritize effectively and quickly respond to shifting priorities; ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions, and recommend solutions; strong work ethic and willingness to work beyond regular hours, if necessary; and a high level of professional discretion and confidentiality. Ability to interpret and prepare information for analysis activities and communicate findings to leadership is essential. Knowledge, enthusiasm, and passion for the field of early childhood and ability to establish credibility in the education/human service and university communities is also required. All employees must follow Board of Regents bylaws and policies and state and federal law and other rules and regulations.
- **Technical Skills**
This position demands technology proficiency, with a willingness to learn and use new technologies relating to (but not limited to) document management, project and portfolio management, budget tracking, and online learning. Proficiency in using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook is also required.
- **Interactions**
This position will be expected to manage and collaborate with individuals and their projects. This requires the ability to assume authority, advocate new ideas, identify and address obstacles, and seek supervision and/or input from others when necessary. This position will help build and strengthen relationships with the University of Nebraska campuses and must have the ability to work as a member of a team, as well as independently, in a complex environment with respect for confidential and sensitive information. This position also interacts with many external stakeholders. The candidate should be an optimistic, positive, resilient, insightful, and performance-driven decision maker, problem solver, and consensus builder.
- **Supervision**
This position reports to the Director of Professional Learning. This position supervises the Professional Learning Specialist and exercises project-specific supervision for numerous staff within the Institute.

Physical Requirements and Work Conditions

The physical requirements and work conditions described here are representative of what an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Attendance at the workplace is critical. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is routinely required to have vision for up close and far away, talk, hear, sit, and use hands to touch, feel, handle, and operate routine office equipment. The employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, climb stairs, bend, reach, twist, and lift, carry or move up to 15 pounds. The employee is required to occasionally travel to and participate in meetings and conferences that may require the ability to drive a motor vehicle or stay overnight.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, and there are frequent interruptions as the Institute staff conduct business in cubicles, walled office space, and conference rooms.