

ABOUT THE BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

Vision

Nebraska will be the best place in the nation to be a baby.

Mission

To transform the lives of young children by improving their learning and development.

Who We Are

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is a four-campus, multidisciplinary research, practice, policy, and outreach center devoted to improving the development and learning of children from birth through age 8. We focus on the first eight years because, as decades of research have shown, the experiences of the early years have a major impact on children's success in school and life. We work collaboratively with our university partners, communities, agencies, schools, and families to implement evidence-based, high-quality systems and practices designed to help children reach their greatest potential.

What We Believe

We believe all children deserve the opportunity to develop, learn, and succeed in life.

We believe the best time to affect a child's future is during the first eight years of life.

We believe applying evidence-based practices improves outcomes for all children.

We believe in supporting all aspects of children's development throughout the first eight years of life.

We believe early childhood intervention is a critically important investment for the future.

Our Goals

- Increase opportunities for young children to learn, and eliminate income-based and race-based opportunity and achievement gaps by the end of third grade.
- Ensure a skilled, informed, and diverse workforce is available to all children.
- Improve public understanding of and support for early childhood services for children and families in Nebraska.

What We Do

- *Research:* Applied research in support of the learning and development of children at risk, birth through age 8.
- *Practice:* Working with others to implement evidence-based practices that improve young children's learning and development.
- *Policy:* Public policy informed by the best available evidence of what works to improve learning and developmental outcomes.
- *Outreach:* Outreach and public education to share what we know about early childhood and to encourage supportive environments for young children.

Principal Strategies

- Convening early childhood influencers and stakeholders.
- Bridging to meaningful resources and knowledge.
- Partnering with agencies, providers, school districts, and others.
- Innovating and creating new solutions.
- Communicating and translating scientific findings and general knowledge about child development for parents, providers, policymakers, and the public.

Signature Programs

Two signature programs shape our efforts to improve the lives of children in our communities:

Closing the Opportunity Gap focuses on reducing or eliminating opportunity gaps, with an emphasis on children growing up in poverty or other conditions of high stress and familial challenge. This statewide program was launched in the Omaha area in fall 2014. Over time, we will collaborate with partner organizations, agencies, schools, and others to introduce new initiatives in other communities.

Elevating the Early Childhood Workforce seeks to ensure the presence of a skilled workforce in all early care and education settings. It confronts such critical issues as professional preparation and qualifications, workforce compensation, funding, and sustained public will and commitment. Our goal is to help early care and education become recognized as a priority profession whose work is essential to the social and economic well-being of children, families, and communities.

University of Nebraska Partners

- University of Nebraska–Lincoln
- University of Nebraska at Omaha
- University of Nebraska at Kearney
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- University of Nebraska Central Administration

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