

NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD CAMPAIGN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Nebraska Early Childhood Campaign?

The Nebraska Early Childhood Campaign is a statewide collaborative effort designed to build support for quality early childhood care and education. Communities and organizations are coming together in a public-private partnership to increase awareness of the need for equitable access to early childhood care and education and to underscore the role of the early childhood workforce in providing quality experiences for young children.

2. What is the goal of the campaign? And why is it important?

The goal of the Nebraska Early Childhood Campaign is to build support for quality early childhood care and education in Nebraska. The campaign is based on a half-century of research that makes clear that the earliest years of a child's life are the most formative and set a child on a trajectory for success in school and life. In Nebraska today, there is a lack of affordable quality early childhood programs, and the early childhood workforce that cares for and educates young children is under extreme stress with many of them leaving the field permanently.

3. What does the campaign hope to accomplish?

The campaign hopes to accomplish the following objectives:

- Promote an aligned understanding of quality in early childhood care and education
- Increase understanding and appreciation of the role of the early childhood workforce in providing quality care and education in Nebraska
- Expand recognition of the economic importance of quality early care and education and the early childhood workforce
- Build public will for access to quality early childhood care and education
- Increase communications capacity among campaign partners and collaborators to sustain and continue community engagement efforts made in public campaigns

4. Who will the campaign reach?

The campaign intends to reach Nebraskans across the state with a special emphasis on three primary audiences: parents and families, the early childhood workforce, and networks that engage opinion and community leaders across the state.

5. How will success be measured at the end of the campaign? What is the long-term outcome?

An evaluation plan with specific campaign metrics is in development with the assistance of an external evaluator. Desired outcomes, however, largely align with the campaign goals and objectives. The long-term aim over time is that every family in Nebraska has access to quality early childhood care and education.

6. What is the campaign timeline?

The campaign was developed in 2021 through a collaborative process that involved early childhood partners and stakeholders. The campaign's "soft launch" occurred in January 2022 with the formation of a Campaign Advisory Group. The campaign will launch statewide this spring 2022 and remain active through December 2023.

7. How is the campaign funded?

Principal funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Preschool Development Grant. Additional funding is provided by the Holland Foundation and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska.

8. Who is responsible for implementing the campaign?

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute is responsible for the campaign in collaboration with many other early childhood partners and stakeholders. The Institute has joined with Neimand Collaborative, a nationally recognized social impact firm with significant expertise in early care and education, to implement the campaign in collaboration with others.

9. Is there an "ask" associated with the campaign?

Broadly stated, the "ask" is for all Nebraska families to have access to quality early childhood care and education in the state. In the state today, access to affordable quality early care and education remains a persistent and growing challenge. For example, 91% of counties with child care facilities do not have enough available slots to meet current demand and 12 counties in Nebraska have no licensed child care providers.

The campaign will tailor its messages to three primary audiences. Parents and families will be empowered with information about quality early childhood care and education and encouraged to demand equitable access in the communities where they live. The early childhood workforce will be asked to share their stories and speak about their needs to fulfill their mission to children and families. Networks and organizations that include opinion and community leaders will be asked to share campaign materials and to build upon work that is happening in local communities.

10. Will the campaign promote investment in early childhood care and education?

The campaign will feature examples of community organizations and programs that provide quality early childhood care and education services as solutions that need more support and resources from the state, business leaders, and philanthropy. In particular, the campaign will focus on the role of

early childhood caregivers and teachers, the critical role they play in young children’s lives, and the need to better support and invest in these professionals.

Survey research in Nebraska indicates that Nebraskans understand and support the need for additional investments in early childhood education. The report and recommendations of the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission made clear the ways in which those investments relate to each other and the importance of funding an early childhood system that is aligned to the state’s economy. The commission called for fully funding the early childhood system by 2030.

11. How is quality early childhood care and education defined in the campaign?

Quality is defined in terms of each child’s experience. A child experiences quality early care and education as physical and emotional safety and learning in the context of frequent, warm, one-on-one interactions with a caring adult who engages the child in language-rich and educational activities. This definition is aligned with the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan.

12. What ages of children are included in early childhood care and education?

Early childhood is regarded as the time when children are experiencing the most profound brain growth and development and includes the years from birth through age 8.

13. Will the campaign convey that quality early childhood care and education requires trained, knowledgeable, and committed professionals?

Yes! The early childhood workforce and the value and importance of educators will be central to the campaign’s messaging. The campaign will not only position the early childhood workforce as critical providers of quality outside of the family, but also make clear that supporting the workforce with professional development and compensation is essential to supplying each child and family with access to quality.

14. Parents and families in Nebraska want the best for their children. How will the campaign reach those who are currently looking for child care or will be needing child care in the future?

The campaign will empower parents and families to seek out quality early childhood education and increase demand for equitable access. Parents and families will also better understand what quality looks like and that early childhood educators are key to the quality they seek. The campaign website will have easy-to-navigate resources and information for parents and families, including an important link to the Nebraska Child Care Referral Network, a searchable online database that provides information on local child care providers.

15. What is the role of the Campaign Advisory Group? Who are the members?

The campaign will leverage insights and partnership from a key group of statewide early childhood care and education stakeholders who are closely connected to Nebraska communities and families and who have agreed to serve on the Campaign Advisory Group. This group of approximately 25 individuals will provide important feedback and counsel throughout the life of the campaign and will serve as ambassadors for the campaign, helping to share, amplify, and drive engagement across the state. The advisory group will assist in engaging networks to maximize Nebraska’s strengths and

resources in support of outreach and dissemination of materials. Names of Campaign Advisory Group members can be found [here](#).

16. Will campaign resources be available to the public?

Yes. The campaign website will house new and existing resources and materials for parents and families to find more information on accessing quality early care and education in the state. The campaign will also partner with local communities to share and disseminate these resources, including a campaign toolkit with shareable materials, graphics, and templates.

17. Will materials be translated into other languages?

Yes. New materials created for the campaign will be translated into Spanish. The campaign website will also link to partner resources to support community leaders, parents, and families, including resources that are available in Spanish and other languages. There will also be a Spanish-language version of the website.

18. How will the campaign reach diverse and under-resourced communities?

The campaign will reach diverse and under-resourced communities through a variety of communication, media, and grassroots efforts. In particular, campaign partners working directly with parents, families, educators, and communities in need of additional support, services, and resources are an essential way the campaign will reach and engage with these audiences. The campaign will lift up voices from diverse and under-resourced communities, sharing their personal stories in accessing quality care for their children.

19. How can I learn more and get involved?

To learn more about the Nebraska Early Childhood Campaign and become involved, please share your contact information [here](#). As the campaign formally launches, information about further engagement will be shared.

20. Who is the contact person for questions and updates related to the campaign?

Kara Ficke is the Nebraska Early Childhood Campaign Manager and can be reached at kara@neimandcollaborative.com or 402.226.6500.