

PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Job Overview

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is seeking applications from qualified individuals for the position of Program Specialist with the Program Development team. The role of a Program Specialist is to build community, district, and school capacity through evidence-based practices working directly with parents, districts, and school-level and community-based leaders to strengthen care and learning opportunities of children from birth to third grade.

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. A 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. This position will work primarily out of the Omaha office.

Program Specialists are recruited based on having an expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate pedagogy for birth to third grade
- Out-of-School Time (OST) alignment to student learning goals
- Research and data analysis focused on continuous improvement for birth to third grade
- Child care partnerships/effective transition practices
- Community/parent partnerships to support birth to third grade success

Job Responsibilities

This section describes major responsibilities for the position but is not an exhaustive or exclusive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. Employees may be required to perform other job-related instructions as requested.

- Under the guidance of Program Development team initiatives and Buffett Early Childhood Institute leadership this position works to build strong relationships with district and community teams to foster alignment between child care providers, schools/districts, and out-of-school providers for children from birth to Grade 3.
- Collaborate with Professional Learning unit to provide input around the needs in districts, schools, and community, as well as in the development of resources to be used with school and community

partners.

- Participate in leadership planning and discussions as they relate to Superintendents' Plan implementation.
- Support program administrators in using data to improve equity-centered supports at all levels and work collaboratively with others to align birth to Grade 3 initiatives.
- Provide equity-centered professional learning for child care providers, grade-level teams, parents, and OST providers in collaboration with the Institute's Professional Learning unit.
- Promote the Community of Practice and Reciprocal Learning Partnership (equity-rooted conversations) models for stakeholders.
- Provide technical support, resource materials, learning tools, and information to collaborative teams (child care directors, principals, teacher leaders/coaches, parent leaders, grade-level teams, community-based early education, and OST leaders) to support quality, continuity, and equity-centered support.
- Visit schools and OST and child care programs frequently (at least monthly) to observe, discuss, and gain insight into the day-to-day opportunities and challenges.
- Collaborate with Educational Service Unit and district-level coaches to embed elements of equity, quality, and continuity into coaching and professional learning on a larger scale.
- Support the development of leaders and coaches in understanding the coaching cycle, effective professional development design and delivery, the implementation of curriculum and varied assessments, and data analysis through an equity-centered lens.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in fields related to early childhood education and elementary education and/or certified in elementary teaching with early childhood education certificate or endorsement
- Five years' experience working with staff/families/children with diverse perspectives (racially, culturally, and linguistically)

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in human development, family studies, social work, early childhood or elementary education
- Certified in elementary teaching, with early childhood education certificate or endorsement
- Experience with coaching or nurturing a professional community of adult learners that directly impacted instructional practices
- Bilingual in Spanish (oral and written)
- A demonstrated body of work with emphasis on birth to Grade 3

Ideal candidates will demonstrate and model a passion for equity, school as hub reform, and leadership; 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 with distributed resources and/or project teams; and commitment to the quality, continuity, and equity of early childhood development and education.

How to Apply

Application review begins immediately and continues until position is filled.

Applications processed through the online job posting at <https://careers.nebraska.edu>. Follow instructions to complete the Applicant Profile. Along with your application, attach a cover letter,

resume, and contact information for three professional references. 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. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status.

Competencies

- **Nature/Complexity of Work**
Must be able to function as a team member on projects and collaborate with other functional areas internal and external to the Institute. Meticulous attention to detail, accuracy, and timeliness are essential for purposes of planning and coordinating work, composing documents and reports, and exchanging information, plans, and objectives.
- **Problem-Solving/Decision-Making**
The employee has freedom to decide how tasks will be accomplished by prioritization and setting pace of workload to maximize outcomes in compliance with reporting guidelines, grant criteria, university policies, and state and federal law. Decisions must often be made quickly to meet stakeholder demands. Strong analytical, problem-solving, decision-making, and multitasking skills required. Requires independent judgment and self-direction to complete tasks, prioritize work, determine the tools and approach to be used in developing analysis, and determine the degree to which detail and information is needed to adequately respond to requests, trends, barriers, opportunities, and threats.
- **Strategic Input**
Confidentiality is required. The employee has access to work-in-progress discussions and confidential and sensitive information pertaining to employees, students, children, and families. Employee is required to be proficient and conscientious when representing the Buffett Institute.
- **Know-How**
In addition to required qualifications, this position requires the ability to work under pressure and with stringent timelines, respond quickly to shifting priorities, make sound priority judgments, and work independently and in a team setting. Must possess strong research skills including the ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions, and recommend solutions. Employee is required to have excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to explain orally and in written communication diverse technical topics in easy-to-understand language to create and nurture a professional community of adult learners. Must demonstrate evidence of professional growth, including leadership and participation in a wide range of significant professional development activities.
- **Technical Skills**
In addition to required qualifications, this position may need to train others on tools and must be proficient with email, Internet browsers, and Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint) to plan, coordinate work, prepare data, process documentation, and create communication materials or informational presentations. This position must be willing to learn and use new

technologies and keep current on technical skills and knowledge of university applications and systems as well as contribute to the development of systems and structures to improve school as a hub practice.

- Interactions
Relationships with various entities both internal and external to the university are involved. Employee will work extensively with staff at the Buffett Institute, external constituencies, and with NU's Office of the President and campuses. Employee must have the ability to work collaboratively, as well as independently, in a complex environment.
- Supervision
This position reports to and receives direct supervision from a Program Administrator of the Program Development unit. Employee must model continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and apply new learning to help direct reports achieve the goal of student success by providing and receiving constructive feedback.

General Information:

Job Family: Education and Outreach (EO25)
Job Code: 49263300
FLSA: Exempt
Org. Unit Number: 50008150 (BECI)
Date of Last Update: 3/15/2022 by Human Resources

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.