

NEWS RELEASE

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EDUCATORS, CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO FOCUS ON HARNESSING POWER OF LANGUAGE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LITERACY

Nationally Recognized Early Literacy Expert Nell Duke Giving Keynote Address

Omaha, Neb. — Research-based practices that support children's emerging literacy by prioritizing language and communication starting at birth will be the focus of the 2018-19 Professional Development for All series.

The series, which kicks off Thursday, Sept. 20, will examine practices including vocabulary development, productive communication during play and literacy instruction, and embracing children's home language and culture as strengths.

More than 200 administrators, teachers, caregivers, and other professionals who serve young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties are expected at the PD for All institute, which runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 2825 Y Street in Omaha.

Nell Duke, a nationally recognized expert on early literacy, will deliver the keynote, "High-Utility Practices for Developing Language, Promoting Literacy, and Achieving Equity." Duke is professor of literacy, language, and culture at the University of Michigan.

"We are so excited that educators from Douglas and Sarpy are coming together to hear from Nell Duke, who is a leading national voice on early literacy," said Chris Maxwell, director of program development at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. "We have a really strong lineup of national and local speakers, including our University of Nebraska at Omaha colleagues **Anne Karabon** and **Debora Wisneski**." Karabon's talk is entitled "The Vocabulary of Math and Science;" Wisneski's is "The Story of Me, You, and Us: Storytelling and Storyacting in Early Childhood Education."

Other featured speakers include **Jonathan Fribley**, an early childhood consultant, coach, mentor, and trainer, who will focus on parents and families; and **Cristina Gillanders**, an associate professor of early childhood education at the University of Colorado, who will talk about vocabulary and linguistically diverse learners.

Developed by the Buffett Institute and funded by the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, the free professional development series is now in its fourth year. "PD for All" is designed to introduce leading-edge research and innovative practices to those who work with young children and their families. Additionally, the institutes give early childhood professionals the chance to come together

and learn from each other.

About the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is a groundbreaking initiative that represents one of the nation's most innovative, comprehensive approaches to reducing achievement gaps for children from birth through Grade 3. It is built around intensive, continuous, and evidence-based services for children living in high concentrations of poverty in the Omaha metro area. The plan was developed by the Buffett Institute in partnership with the 11 school districts of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The Buffett Institute continues to facilitate implementation of the plan, which is funded by the Learning Community.

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The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska promotes the development and learning of children from birth through age 8. Our vision is to make Nebraska the best place in the nation to be a baby. Visit buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu for more information.