



AGENDA

Monday, September 16, 2019

2019 Thriving Children, Families, and Communities Conference

8:00 a.m. Check-in and Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Opening Remarks, Keynote Address, and Community Activity

Children and Communities: What Thriving Looks Like and What It Takes

As communities inch forward in establishing early childhood systems for children to be learning and developing well, do we know what it takes for caregivers, educators, and communities to help children thrive and reach their potential? Helen Raikes, Willa Cather Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will share what it means for children to thrive and how families, caregivers, and educators can support them. Dr. Raikes will describe what it takes for communities to provide the collaboration and coordination for children, families, teachers, providers, and communities to thrive.

11:00 a.m. Morning Workshops

12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:00 p.m. Panel Discussion

Community Success Stories: Success Is Possible

Hear from Nebraska communities and collaborators who have had success building high-quality early childhood development programs. No matter the size of your community, success is possible and panelists from Columbus, Fremont, Red Cloud, and the Panhandle will tell you what they've done—and are continuing to do—to support children, families, and communities.

1:30 p.m. Panel Discussion

Economic Development and Early Childhood

Nebraska has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, with employers often having difficulty finding qualified workers to fill their jobs. Early childhood can be part of the solution! Listen to experts discuss why high-quality early childhood care and education is an economic development tool that can attract and retain a quality workforce and grow our state's economy.

3:00 p.m. Afternoon Workshops

4:00 p.m. Networking Reception

Morning Workshops

What Is High-Quality Early Care and Education?

We know from brain research that young children need high-quality care and education to do well and to be well as children and into adulthood. But what do we mean by high quality? This session will address high quality from the perspective of the child, and explore ways adults can ensure a culture of high-quality care and education for young children in their communities.

Communications 101: How to Communicate Effectively About Local Early Childhood Efforts

Learn how to maximize local communications resources and opportunities to promote your community's early childhood goals in this interactive and hands-on session.

No-Cost/Low-Cost Ways Employers Can Help Working Parents of Young Children

Nebraska ranks among the highest states in the nation for its percentage of working parents with young children, which means our state's employers have a real stake in helping this important segment of the workforce provide for the early care and education of their children. This session will look at how business owners can better understand the needs of their employees and find easy and creative ways to promote information about quality child care and other supports to help working parents succeed as productive employees and more effective providers for their families.

Communicating Effectively With Policymakers About Early Childhood

We all need to learn how to talk about important early childhood issues in a clear and concise manner—and in ways that we can be heard. It is especially important that our elected officials hear from us and about the early childhood challenges we face in our communities. In this session, a panel of former state senators will share their perspectives on how to communicate effectively, build relationships, and engage policymakers on early childhood issues.

Law Enforcement Support for Early Childhood Education

Police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors are coming together to support early childhood education! In Nebraska and across the nation they are joining Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, which is a member of the national Council for a Strong America. In this session, Nebraska police chiefs and prosecutors will host a panel discussion releasing a new Nebraska report on how high-quality early childhood programs can provide the foundation for school success, reduce involvement in the criminal justice system, and improve public safety.

Building School-Community Partnerships Across Nebraska

Early childhood spans the time of a young child's life from birth through Grade 3 with families, communities, and schools all sharing responsibility for the care and education of young children during this critical time of development. In this session, representatives from four Nebraska communities will share examples of various approaches to partnerships between schools and community early childhood providers—all working together to ensure children's success in school and life.

Cities in Action: Building Early Learning Communities

Leaders in communities across the country recognize the importance of ensuring that young children and families thrive, and they understand that child well-being and thriving communities go hand in hand. They are using an Early Learning Community Action Guide to improve outcomes for young children by promoting and advancing key building blocks of success that ensure young children grow up safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Six cities in Nebraska and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation are participating in a National League of Cities initiative, City Leadership for Building an Early Learning Nation. This session will highlight how three of the Nebraska cities and cities across the country are taking action by advancing the four key building blocks of an early learning community and provide opportunities for participants to consider what is next for their community.

Afternoon Workshops

The Quality Continuum

When opening an early childhood center, an immediate focus is to meet state licensing requirements. Over time the focus evolves from meeting the minimum requirements, such as licensing, to the elements that contribute to a quality early childhood education and care program, including maintaining minimum adult to child ratios to engaging children in rich interactions, and from reacting to daily events to planning meaningful learning experiences. This session will focus on the journey from entry-level quality to higher standards of quality. Through various interactive activities and discussions, participants will identify indicators of quality and decisions to be made as early childhood programs move along the quality continuum.

Community Fundraising: Tools for Creating Your Fund Development Plan and Approaching Donors

This session will provide information about how to create a fundraising plan, including ideas for researching and approaching potential funders. Practical knowledge and tools will be shared for communities to begin creating their own fundraising plans.

Using Economic Development Funds to Grow Your Community's Child Care Infrastructure

In 2019 the Legislature passed LB160, a bill that provides a new funding mechanism for early childhood programs. Communities can now use Local Option Municipal Economic Development (LB840) funds to expand, improve, or build their early childhood infrastructure. In this discussion, participants will learn about these economic development funds, how they are used, and how to craft a proposal to capture these funds for early childhood projects.

Taking Employer Support for Quality Child Care to the Next Level

More and more Nebraska employers are considering the role quality child care plays in attracting and anchoring a skilled workforce in their businesses and communities. In this session, we'll look at what employers need to know about exploring corporate child care solutions, partnering with local providers to ensure quality child care services for their workers, and finding other ways to offset the costs of high-quality early care and learning.

Promoting Health and Wellness: Child Care Matters!

Learn promising and successful ways programs in Nebraska are promoting health and wellness in child care. Panelists will talk about ways to foster healthy nutrition and physical activity, promoting emotional well-being, and creating safe environments.

Inclusive Leadership Development: Advancing High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Learn about an innovative partnership between the University of Nebraska's Rural Futures Institute and communities where Community Innovation Fellows and Student Fellows work together on key projects. In this session, you'll learn about how these efforts support the development of inclusive leaders and hear from Community Innovation Fellows from Chadron and Garden County about the impact of their efforts.

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS STILL BEING ADDED.

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