

## NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE BY THE NUMBERS

### Need

- Nearly 80 percent of children age 5 and younger in Nebraska are in some type of paid care.<sup>1</sup>
- Sixty-two percent of mothers with infants are in the labor force in Nebraska.<sup>2</sup>
- Eleven counties in Nebraska have no licensed child care facilities.<sup>3</sup>
- Approximately 84 percent of counties in Nebraska with child care facilities do not have enough available slots to meet the current demand.<sup>3</sup>
- Seventy-six percent of child care centers experienced turnover of lead teachers or assistant teachers during the prior year.<sup>4</sup>
- The Nebraska Department of Education lists both Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education as “Teacher Shortage Areas.”
- The Nebraska Department of Labor projects that the number of positions for child care professionals will increase by more than 13 percent over the next 10 years.

### Preparation

- Of the 20 colleges and universities in Nebraska that offer early childhood degree programs, there is little consistency among them regarding curriculum and degree requirements. For example, each includes at least one supervised practicum experience, but the required classroom hours vary from nine to 150.<sup>5</sup>
- Forty-five percent of center-based teachers and 23 percent of home-based providers who responded to the statewide Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey have a bachelor’s degree.<sup>6</sup>

### Compensation

- In 2015, the median annual salary for child care professionals in Nebraska was \$19,620, which is nearly \$3,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. The median annual salary for Kindergarten teachers was \$47,910, more than twice as much as those who teach in other early childhood settings.<sup>7</sup>
- More than 11 percent of home-based providers have a second job and nearly 20 percent of center-based teachers, public PreK teachers, and K-3 teachers report holding a second job.<sup>6</sup>
- More than 13 percent of home-based and center-based child care providers report that their own school-aged children qualify for free or reduced lunch prices.<sup>6</sup>
- Nearly half of Nebraskans believe that teachers and caregivers are paid too little.<sup>8</sup>

### Affordability

- The annual cost for center-based infant care (\$9,043) is higher than the average cost of college tuition at a public four-year institution in Nebraska (\$7,883).<sup>9</sup>

- The average child care subsidy payment provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to assist low-income families with child care costs (\$2,948) is less than one-third the cost of annual infant child care (\$9,043).<sup>3</sup>
- Nebraska spends nearly twice as much per student on K-12 education (\$10,621/student) as it does on PreKindergarten (\$5,711/student).<sup>10</sup>

### **Return on Investment**

- The annual return on investment for each dollar spent on high-quality preschool programs for children living in poverty is between 7 percent and 10 percent.<sup>11</sup>
- Investment returns increase to 13 percent annually when early childhood programs span birth through age 5.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buffett Early Childhood Institute research staff

<sup>2</sup> *State Baby Facts, Zero to Three*

<sup>3</sup> *Kids Count, 2016*

<sup>4</sup> *Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey, Buffett Early Childhood Institute*

<sup>5</sup> *Nebraska Higher Education Inventory, Buffett Early Childhood Institute*

<sup>6</sup> *Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey, Buffett Early Childhood Institute.* This statistic is based only on those who responded to the survey and is not necessarily a representative sample of the state.

<sup>7</sup> Report from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education (June 2016)

<sup>8</sup> *Buffett Early Childhood Institute/Gallup Survey on Early Childhood Care and Education in Nebraska*

<sup>9</sup> *Kids Count, 2016* and College Board

<sup>10</sup> *The State of Preschool, 2015, NIEER*

<sup>11</sup> *The Heckman Equation*