

Buffett Institute Community Chairs at the University of Nebraska

Building Partnerships, Creating Impact

About the Chairs

At the four campuses across the University of Nebraska System, Community Chairs collaborate with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute to deepen engagement across Nebraska with work focusing on infant mental health, community-engaged research, nature-based learning environments, play-based learning, and systems change. The chairs reflect each campus's strengths in early learning and development. In addition to fulfilling the traditional faculty roles of teaching, research, and service, Community Chairs provide campus leadership and are responsive to the local community.

Current and former Community Chairs have partnered on projects including:

- RESPECT Across Nebraska project to address the early childhood educator shortages
- Omaha Urban Thinkscapes
- Knowledge Network for Early Childhood Workforce (KNEW) Project in rural Nebraska
- University of Nebraska at Omaha Early Childhood Inclusive (ECI) Program
- Addressing childhood obesity and promoting healthy eating
- Help Me Grow Nebraska focusing on early detection of developmental delays
- Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
- A Grand Rounds Series that brings together NU faculty, staff, and students to discuss early childhood research, practice, and policy

Community chairs reflect the strengths of each campus related to early learning and development. They play an integral role in the Institute's mission to connect early childhood research, policy, and practice—all across our great university system.

Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.
President, University of Nebraska System

Current Community Chairs



Philip Lai



*Cille and Ron Williams Community
Chair for Early Childhood Education
University of Nebraska Kearney*



Paula Thompson



*Cille and Ron Williams Community
Chair for Early Childhood Education
University of Nebraska Kearney*



Julia Torquati



*Community Chair in Infant and
Child Mental Health
University of Nebraska–Lincoln*



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