

10 Facts About Early Childhood Education in Nebraska

1

Early childhood is regarded as the period of time in a young child's life **from birth through age 8**. The brain is developing more rapidly during these early years of life than at any other time.¹

2

Nebraska families need quality early childhood programs to work and support their families. More than **76%** of children **under age 6** in our state live **in homes where all adults work**.²

3

Nebraska is facing an early childhood care and education crisis. Almost every county in the state (**91%**) with licensed child care programs **does not have enough places to meet demand**.³

4

Families in **10 Nebraska counties do not have access to licensed child care programs**.³

5

Nearly half (**46%**) of licensed **child care providers** in Nebraska who employ staff report that staff have **left the profession** entirely, in part, due to low compensation.⁴

6

The median **annual pay** for center-based teachers **falls below the poverty line** for a family of 3.⁵

7

Nearly **30%** of home-based providers and **20%** of center-based teachers **depend on some type of public assistance**.⁵

8

Nebraska's child care crisis is hurting employers and state revenues. Nebraska businesses report **losses of \$745 million** annually due to **absenteeism, lost productivity, and employee turnover**.⁶

9

Investments in high-quality early care and education yield an average return of \$4 for every dollar spent; in circumstances where children are extremely vulnerable, the **return can be as high as \$13**.⁷

10

More than 80% (**84%**) of Nebraska voters **agree** that the lack of child care in Nebraska is a problem that will not solve itself and **Nebraskans must come together to solve the problem and invest in solutions**.⁸

Supporting Nebraska's children and early childhood teachers is a win for everyone.

CITATIONS

1. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Eds. J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
2. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. Table: "Children under age 6 with all available parents in the labor force in the United States" and "Children under age 6 with all available parents in the labor force in Nebraska." Retrieved from: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/8112-percentage-of-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force>
3. Voices for Children. (2024). Kids count in Nebraska report. Retrieved from: <https://voicesforchildren.com/research/2024-kids-count-report/>
4. Daro, A., Gallagher, K., & Cunningham, K. (2022). The Nebraska COVID-19 early care and education provider survey III: "Holding It Together—and Hanging by a Thread". Retrieved from: <https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/-/media/beci/docs/covid-iii-report-05162022.pdf>
5. Roberts, A.M., Iruka, I.U., & Sarver, S.L. (2017). Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey: A focus on providers and teachers. This statistic is based only on those who responded to the survey and is not necessarily a representative sample of the state.
6. The Bottom Line: Economic Impacts of Inadequate Child Care Access in Nebraska. (2020). First Five Nebraska. Retrieved from: <https://www.firstfive-nebraska.org/blog/lack-of-child-care-costs-nebraskans-745-million-per-year-report-finds/>
7. Heckman, J., Pinto, R., & Savelyev, P. (2013). Understanding the Mechanisms Through Which an Influential Early Childhood Program Boosted Adult Outcomes. *American Economic Review*, 103(6), 2052–2086. Heckman Equation: The Economics of Human Potential. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://heckmanequation.org/>
8. Nebraska Extension and We Care for Kids 2023 Statewide Survey. Retrieved from: <https://nebraskacaresforkids.org/2023-statewide-survey/>



Learn more at
NebraskaCaresForKids.org



We
Care
for Kids

Quality Early Childhood Education
For All Nebraska Families