



Key Messages and Talking Points

- 1. We Care for Kids is a statewide community-based campaign to build support for quality early childhood education for all Nebraska families.**
 - *We Care for Kids* is a partnership of many diverse state and community-based organizations throughout Nebraska and is coordinated by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska. This is a growing effort, inviting Nebraskans to join the campaign.
 - The *We Care for Kids* website NebraskaCaresForKids.org provides information on the importance of quality early childhood education, builds support for early childhood educators, helps families find quality programs, and encourages communities to share solutions to bring quality early childhood education to all Nebraska families. The website is also available in Spanish at Portodoslosninos.org.
 - More than 20 early childhood champions are participating in the [We Care for Kids Campaign Advisory Group](#), helping advocate, amplify, and drive engagement throughout the state. The group includes educators, families, community leaders, and foundations.
 - Funding for the campaign is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Preschool Development Grant, the Holland Foundation, and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

- 2. The more we care about bringing quality early childhood education to all Nebraska families, the more we ensure Nebraska thrives.**
 - Quality early childhood education supports Nebraska's kids—and its future.
 - Nearly 90% of brain development takes place during a child's first five years of life—spurred on by constant positive interactions with family, early educators, and peers.
 - Families can work knowing that their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are in a safe, loving, and stimulating environment to learn and grow stronger with the help of a quality early childhood educator.
 - Early childhood educators know how to nurture and help young children learn skills that will last a lifetime.

- In fact, children who receive quality childhood education are better prepared to learn, more likely to read by the fourth grade, graduate school, and go on to college.
- When working families have access to early childhood education, Nebraska's employers have access to the talent they need to thrive.
- That's why all families should have access to quality early childhood educators in their communities—however, many don't because there aren't enough early childhood educators.

3. Quality early childhood education helps Nebraska work.

- Parents and families are children's first teachers, but most Nebraska children aren't with their parents for many hours of the day. Nebraskans are known for working hard.
- In Nebraska, more than 76% of children under age six live in homes where all adults work, which is higher than the national average. Additionally, 70% of mothers with infants and toddlers are in the labor force.
- Families need peace of mind to go to work knowing their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are being prepared for success by a caring and skilled early childhood educator.
- Ninety-one percent of counties in Nebraska with child care facilities do not have enough available slots to meet the current demand. And 12 counties in Nebraska have no licensed child care facilities.

4. Nebraska doesn't work without the work of its early childhood educators—and they need our support now. We don't have enough of them.

- Skilled early childhood educators are critical to quality learning—and a thriving future—for Nebraska's children. It's up to us to make sure they are appreciated, supported, and recruited to serve our children, families, and state.
- Two-thirds of licensed center-based providers [recently surveyed](#) by the Buffett Institute said they were experiencing turnover, and of those providers, nearly 70% reported that staff had found jobs outside of early childhood. 9 out of 10 providers employing staff have had difficulty hiring open positions, citing a lack of applicants and inability to offer sufficient pay.

- As much as early childhood educators love caring for and educating Nebraska's children, it's hard for them to stay in business and in the profession and still support their own families.
- Nearly 30% of home-based providers and 20% of center-based teachers depend on some type of public assistance. And more than 13% of home-based and center-based child care providers report that their own school-aged children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

5. Nebraskans can help solve the problem by joining We Care for Kids at NebraskaCaresForKids.org.

- The [We Care for Kids website](http://WeCareforKids.org) provides early childhood education resources for families, a platform for early childhood educators to tell their stories, and a communications toolkit for Nebraskans to become more involved.
 - Families visiting the site will be able to search for an early childhood program or provider in their community, understand how quality early childhood educators help prepare children for success in school and life, and learn what to look for in their search.
 - Community organizing, informational, and communications resources will be easy to access and are intended to help support individuals and communities taking action to ensure that all Nebraska families have access to quality early childhood education.
 - The website will feature stories and voices of early childhood educators in our state—raising the urgency of supporting these professionals and placing educators at the center of bringing access to quality services and programs to all Nebraska children.
- Resources are available from Nebraska-based early childhood partners, including First Five Nebraska, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, Step Up to Quality, and more!
- The website is also available in Spanish at Portodoslosninos.org.