



## Press Release

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For Immediate Release

### **We Care for Kids Spearheads Week of the Young Child Celebrations**

#### *Proclamations and Events Planned Across Nebraska April 1-7*

April 3, 2023 – This week, communities across Nebraska will join We Care for Kids to recognize [Week of the Young Child](#) and celebrate early learning, young children, their teachers, families, and communities. Multiple cities and municipalities have issued proclamations and more than 25 events are planned throughout the state. The celebrations all share a common goal: to help all Nebraskans understand the importance of supporting young children and their families through quality early childhood education.

“Each and every child matters,” said Michelle Suarez, a member of the Lincoln City Council which proclaimed April 1–7 as Week of the Young Child. “The children that are born today are going to be our future. If we care about our future in terms of economics, social, political, any kind of avenue or arena, these children are going to be the leaders and the decision makers. We need each child to be strong, healthy, and resilient, and that is why early childhood education matters.”

In addition to Lincoln's proclamation, local governments in Omaha, Sutton, South Sioux City, Syracuse, Gering, and Nebraska City officially designated April 1-7 as Week of the Young Child. Community celebrations, including concerts, scavenger hunts, art exhibits, and family fun nights, are scheduled throughout Nebraska. Details can be found at [NebraskaCaresForKids.org](#).

The celebrations come as Nebraska is experiencing a child care and early learning crisis. A February [survey](#) commissioned by Nebraska Extension and [We Care for Kids](#) found that 84% of Nebraska voters say the lack of child care in Nebraska is a problem that will not solve itself. The same percentage want Nebraskans to come together to solve the problem and believe Nebraska should support child care and early learning like it does K-12 schools and higher education.

When Nebraska families have access to quality early childhood education, Nebraska's children, communities, and economy thrive. Nearly 90% of brain development takes place during a

child's first five years of life, and kids who receive quality early childhood education are better prepared to learn and more likely to read by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, graduate high school, and go on to further their education. Yet, many Nebraska children and families do not have access to quality programs and services, with over 72% of the state's children under age six living in homes where all adults work, and 91% of counties with licensed child care programs lacking enough spaces to meet demand.

"Families want access to quality early childhood education so they can go to work with the peace of mind that their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are in a safe, loving, and stimulating environment," said Kara Ficke, campaign manager for We Care for Kids. "Young children need to be able to learn and grow stronger with the help of skilled early childhood educators; doing so helps prepare children for success in school and life and helps our state grow and thrive."

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has sponsored the Week of the Young Child since 1971 with the goal of focusing the public's attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

More information can be found at [NebraskaCaresForKids.org](http://NebraskaCaresForKids.org). The site also provides materials in English and Spanish that can be used to promote early childhood care and education. We Care for Kids is proud to have supporters in all areas of the state who are available to meet with community organizations and available for interviews with the media.

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## **We Care for Kids**

We Care for Kids is a partnership of more than 50 diverse state and community-based organizations throughout Nebraska and is coordinated by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska. We Care for Kids works to ensure that all Nebraska families have access to quality early childhood education for their children.

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