



2012 CYFS SUMMIT ON RESEARCH IN  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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CREATING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RESEARCH & PRACTICE

————— JOINTLY SPONSORED BY CYFS & BECI —————

APRIL 25, 2012

HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

# WELCOME

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Dear Colleagues,

The Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI) welcome you to the 2012 CYFS Summit on Research in Early Childhood: Creating Connections Between Research and Practice. This event provides an exciting opportunity to showcase the front-line research that is being conducted in the field of early childhood by CYFS research faculty affiliates – and to create connections and generate dialogue among the community partners, key stakeholders and early childhood practitioners drawing links among research, policy and practice.

Early childhood research emanating from CYFS is progressive, with its researchers recognized as leaders in the field. The collaborative partnerships that have been formed with researchers, teachers, service providers and administrative stakeholders throughout the state have benefited the lives of many young children, families, educators and programs. It is the mission of CYFS to continue to support these partnerships, pioneering innovative research that will allow all young children, across Nebraska and beyond, to realize their full potential.

This biennial event was made possible through generous donations from our joint sponsor, the BECI, and additional support from the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We also acknowledge our partner, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, for its implementation of the Pre-Summit Infant-Toddler Teaching Forum. The collective dedication to quality research, best practices and community collaboration is critical to the mission of integrating, translating and disseminating the important work emanating from CYFS – and places Nebraska's early childhood education at the leading edge. We thank you for participating in this exciting event and sharing in the important dialogue that will inform our continued endeavors to support the optimal growth, development and education of our young children.

*Susan M. Sheridan*

**Susan M. Sheridan, PhD**

George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology  
Director of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



# AGENDA

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**8:30 - 9:00 AM**

**Registration**

**9:00 - 9:20 AM**

**Opening and Welcome – Lincoln Ballroom**

Dr. Susan Sheridan – Director

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**9:20 - 10:20 AM**

**BECI Keynote Address – Lincoln Ballroom**

**Enhancing Early Childhood Development: A “First Decade” Perspective**

Dr. Arthur Reynolds – Professor

Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota

**10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Session I – Lower Level**

Room	Research Topic	Presenters
Husker	Professional Development	Lisa St. Clair & Gladys Haynes; Lisa Knoche
Missouri	Family Engagement	Sandra Plata-Potter; Brandy Clarke
Platte	Early Learning and Development	Barbara Jackson; Julia Torquati
Niobrara	Early Learning and Development	Anne Schutte; Victoria Molfese & Dennis Molfese

**12:15 - 1:15 PM**

**Luncheon (Sponsored by BECI) – Lincoln Ballroom**

Entertainment provided by Vince Learned – Vocals & Piano

**1:30 - 3:00 PM**

**Session II – Lower Level**

Room	Research Topic	Presenters
Missouri	Policy	Eric Thompson
Platte	Family Engagement	Susan Sheridan & Christine Marvin; Helen Raikes
Husker	Early Learning and Development	Carolyn Pope Edwards & Wendy Smith; Tiffany Hogan
Niobrara	Early Learning and Development	Soo-Young Hong; Kathleen Moritz Rudasill

**3:10 - 3:45 PM**

**Panel and Roundtable Discussions – Lincoln Ballroom**

Tracy Gordon – Co-Executive Director, Nebraska AEYC

Jennifer M. Hernandez – Policy Associate, First Five Nebraska

Eleanor Kirkland – Director, Head Start Early Childhood Systems, Head Start State Collaboration Office

Dawn Mollenkopf – Associate Professor, University of Nebraska-Kearney

**3:45 - 4:00 PM**

**Closing Remarks – Lincoln Ballroom**

Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik – Dean

College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**4:00 - 5:30 PM**

**Reception (Sponsored by BECI) – Arbor Room**

# BE CI KEYNOTE ADDRESS

LINCOLN BALLROOM

9:20 - 10:20 AM

## ENHANCING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: A “FIRST DECADE” PERSPECTIVE

### **Arthur Reynolds, PhD**

Professor

Institute of Child Development

University of Minnesota

Dr. Reynolds will review the history of programs and research on early childhood development programs implemented from birth to age 10. A main focus will be “follow through” approaches and practices to promoting early learning, school readiness, achievement and life-course development. Often referred to as preschool-to-third grade (PK-3) program and practices, the rationale for these models is to promote children’s developmental continuity during key early transitions known to improve learning and well-being. These approaches include Project Developmental Continuity, Head Start / Follow Through, Child-Parent Centers, and the National Head Start Public School Transition Demonstration Project. Ongoing research and findings on the Child-Parent Center PK-3 Program in the Chicago Public Schools will be presented to illustrate the contributions of PK-3 programs to longer-term life-course outcomes and policy initiatives.

Dr. Arthur J. Reynolds is a Professor at the University of Minnesota’s Institute of Child Development. His research focuses on the effects of early childhood intervention on children’s development from school entry to early adulthood, along with family and school influences on children’s educational success. Reynolds seeks to understand the processes by which early childhood determinants such as maltreatment, delinquency and crime, educational attainment, and economic well-being affect development into adulthood. More broadly, he studies the effects of child development and evaluation research on social policy.

Reynolds co-directs the Human Capital Research Collaborative at the University of Minnesota. He also serves as Director of the Chicago Longitudinal Study, which is tracking the life-course development of 1500 children who attended early childhood programs in inner-city Chicago. The study focuses primarily on the effects of the Child-Parent Center Program, a school-based intervention from preschool to the early school grades. Reynolds is also directing an expansion of the Child-Parent Center Program in 30 Midwestern schools that will begin this fall. He has published numerous book chapters and peer-reviewed articles on the longitudinal effects of early childhood intervention programs on education, economic well-being, health, mental health and family outcomes.



# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION I: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HUSKER ROOM

10:30 AM - 12 PM

## EDUCARE OF OMAHA COACHING AND MENTORING: IMPACTS ON CLASSROOM QUALITY

The Educare Coaching and Mentoring intervention focused on supporting Head Start teachers in improving classroom quality. This session will share the results of an investigation of the intervention's impact on classroom quality as measured by the Pre-K CLASS. Findings reveal that, through the intervention, teaching teams improved in organization, emotional climate and instructional support in a relatively short period of time.

### **Lisa St. Clair, EdD**

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Director of the Nebraska Parental Information  
and Resource Center (PIRC)  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

### **Gladys Haynes, PhD**

Executive Director of the Educare Center of Omaha  
Director of Nebraska Early Learning Initiatives  
Buffett Early Childhood Fund

Dr. St. Clair's research interests include family engagement, early childhood professional development and principal supervision of early childhood programs. She is a Program Evaluator at the Munroe-Meyer Institute of UNMC and is a statewide evaluator for such programs as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, Building Bright Futures, and Educare of Omaha. She also serves as Director of the Statewide Nebraska Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC).

Dr. Haynes has directed the Educare Center of Omaha for 10 years and is actively assisting in the development of additional Educare centers across Nebraska. She is interested in best practices for partnering with parents, instructional strategies for English Language Learners, and the use of data to inform instruction. Dr. Haynes previously worked as a school psychologist and supervisor of the Early Childhood Special Education Program in the Omaha Public Schools.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD COACHING IN NEBRASKA: WHAT BEHAVIORS CHARACTERIZE THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN COACH / COACHEE DYADS?

Coaching as a form of professional development is increasingly incorporated into training efforts. This session will highlight findings from the evaluation of coach training efforts across a variety of early childhood settings in Nebraska, including the observed behaviors of coach-coachee dyadic pairs during coaching interactions and information on the association of factors such as coach-coachee education, experience, relationship and work satisfaction. Implications for providing ongoing support and training to early childhood coaches will be discussed.

### **Lisa Knoche, PhD**

Research Associate Professor  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Knoche develops, designs and evaluates early childhood intervention and prevention programs for at-risk children and families. Her work focuses on approaches to supporting school readiness in young children and family involvement in early learning. Dr. Knoche investigates implementation of early childhood interventions, including fidelity, and identifies effective professional development strategies.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Sue Bainter, MA**

Educational Consultant  
Nebraska Department of Education

# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION I: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

MISSOURI ROOM

10:30 AM - 12 PM

## EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL SETTINGS: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FAMILY?

This session will include findings from two studies related to classroom practices and family engagement supports for children's language and literacy development. Results from the Early Reading First Program implemented in central Nebraska will be shared; findings indicate the value of family-focused programming. Additionally, findings will be presented from a follow-up, in-depth study that included qualitative interviews conducted with Latino families to investigate how the quality and quantity of parents' beliefs and engagement in an Early Reading First project evolve into home literacy practices.

### **Sandra Plata-Potter, MA**

Head Start Graduate Student Scholar

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ms. Potter is a doctoral candidate in Child, Youth and Family Studies at UNL. Her research interests include infant, toddler and preschooler development, as well as parental engagement as a support for school readiness skills in children, with a specific focus on Latino families. She has worked on numerous CYFS studies of children and families across many Nebraska communities. Currently, Ms. Potter is utilizing a mixed methods approach to investigate parental behaviors and engagement in the homes of dual-language learners funded through a Head Start Graduate Student Dissertation Grant.

## PROMOTING EARLY LANGUAGE / LITERACY: DEVELOPMENT OF A TIERED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The Pre3T model is a multi-tiered approach to addressing early language and literacy needs of young children at risk for reading difficulties. This model is founded on data-based instructional decision-making and differential implementation of evidence-based language and literacy interventions, of which family engagement is a critical component. Development of the tiered family engagement strategies used in the Pre3T model will be discussed, and preliminary results of the development process will be shared.

### **Brandy Clarke, PhD**

Research Assistant Professor

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Clarke's research interests are focused on early intervention and prevention programming for children and families at risk due to poverty; enhancing home-school partnerships; and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and integrated care practices. She is involved in multiple studies investigating school readiness intervention programs for young children and families, including a multi-tiered language and literacy intervention program for preschool children and a parent engagement school readiness intervention.

## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Amanda Witte, MA**

Project Manager of CBC in Rural Communities

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools

University of Nebraska-Lincoln



# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION I: EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

PLATTE ROOM

10:30 AM - 12 PM

## NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM: WHAT IS ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

An increasing number of young children are being served through the Nebraska Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. This presentation will provide an overview of the child, family and program outcomes for the children ages birth to 5 who are served in this program. New efforts to create a longitudinal data system that links early child outcomes with school-age academic performance will be described.

### **Barbara Jackson, PhD**

Associate Professor of Pediatrics  
Director of Education and Child Development  
Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation (ICPE)  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Jackson's interests are focused on early intervention, specializing in infants with chronic illness and disabilities and their families. She directs the Developmental TIPS (Tracking Infant Progress Statewide) project, which is an NICU follow-up clinical outcome study. As a member of numerous task forces, she contributes to public policy efforts on behalf of young children and their families.

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## THRESHOLDS OF CHILD CARE QUALITY AND CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT: LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR MODELS

This study examined linear and non-linear models to determine whether thresholds of child care quality necessary to positively and optimally impact children's development could be identified using two large data sets with indicators of child care quality and children's development. Results indicate that many associations between quality and children's development are non-linear, providing evidence that thresholds or "sensitive ranges" of quality exist for some developmental outcomes, while others are best represented by linear models. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.

### **Julia Torquati, PhD**

Associate Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Torquati's research interests encompass quality of early care and education, especially environmental education and teacher preparation. Current projects include investigation of children's affinity for nature and conservation knowledge and beliefs, as well as investigation of the influence of natural environments on attention and cognition.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Gina Kunz, PhD**

Research Assistant Professor  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION I: EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

NIOBRARA ROOM

10:30 AM - 12 PM

## THE INFLUENCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS ON CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

Investigations with adults and children have documented restorative aspects of nature, and studies have found that children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder showed enhanced attention on subsequent tasks after a 20-minute walk in a park. This presentation will discuss ongoing research on the influence of natural environments on children's cognition and implications for the environments to which children are exposed.

### **Anne Schutte, PhD**

Associate Professor of Psychology  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Schutte's research interests focus on cognitive development, specifically the role of experience in the development of spatial cognition. Her primary research program centers on the development of spatial working memory in early childhood. Her research is based on the Dynamic Field Theory, a dynamic systems model of cognition.

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## SLEEP HABITS AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The preschool and early school-age period is a time when important cognitive skills are developing, including attention and decision-making processes needed for academic achievement and the inhibitory and self-regulation behavioral controls necessary for social-emotional growth. Research has established a link between the development of these skills and children's sleep habits. Findings from our research and the next steps to investigate toddler sleep habits will be described.

### **Victoria Molfese, PhD**

Chancellor's Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Victoria Molfese is currently investigating the effectiveness of early intervention on math skills in high-risk preschool children; the relation between early reading and mathematics in preschool and elementary-age children; and the role of teacher-student interactions in preschool for cognitive growth. She is also investigating brain processing and the development of executive function skills, along with the impacts of sleep, health status and learning-related behaviors on academic gains by young children.

### **Dennis Molfese, PhD**

Chancellor's Professor of Psychology  
Director of the Brain Imaging Center  
Director of the Neuroscience Laboratory  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Dennis Molfese uses brain recording techniques to study the relationships among brain development, language and cognitive processes. His research interests include developmental changes in brain, language and cognitive processes across the lifespan; the prediction of recovery from concussion; electrophysiological measures of learning and intervention strategies in infancy; electrophysiological techniques to assess hearing abilities in infants and children; and the impact of sleep loss on infants and children.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Kristin Rispoli, PhD**

Postdoctoral Fellow  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln





# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION II: POLICY

MISSOURI ROOM

1:30 - 3 PM

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

The lasting benefit of early childhood programs on children and families is well-documented. Early childhood investments yield cost savings over the life course of children and families. This presentation will highlight a preliminary study that is investigating Nebraska-specific returns on investments in early childhood. A select sample of cost savings data will be shared, including the rate of return on investment, and implications for policy discussions will be highlighted.

### **Eric Thompson, PhD**

Associate Professor of Economics  
Director of the Bureau of Business Research  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Thompson's research interests include regional economics, local and state economic development, and economic forecasting. He is an Associate Professor of Economics and the Director of the Bureau of Business Research in the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Thompson has conducted dozens of studies on economic growth and development in Nebraska.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Gina Kunz, PhD**

Research Assistant Professor  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION II: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

PLATTE ROOM

1:30 - 3 PM

## GETTING READY AT HOME: THE EFFECTS OF PROMOTING PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The Getting Ready intervention focuses on supporting parents in promoting school readiness of young children living in poverty. Early childhood professionals in Head Start and Early Head Start programs guided parent-child interactions to promote warmth, nurturance and support of early learning and development. This presentation will describe Getting Ready; explore unique strategies demonstrated by early childhood professionals; and present results depicting its effects on parents and their children ages birth to 5.

### **Susan Sheridan, PhD**

George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology  
Director of the Nebraska Center for Research  
on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Sheridan's research focuses on promoting school readiness for children and families living in poverty; strengthening home-school partnerships; and developing tiered intervention and family engagement programs to support early learning and development. Dr. Sheridan is the founding Director of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Director of the National Center for Research on Rural Education (R<sup>2</sup>Ed).

Dr. Marvin's interests include interdisciplinary training programs, as well as prevention and intervention programs for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children with disabilities in home and inclusive community-based programs. Her research has focused on the effects of context (i.e., home, school and child care) on young children's communication development and the implications for early literacy and school readiness.

### **Christine Marvin, PhD**

Associate Professor of Special Education and  
Communication Disorders  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

## EARLY STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS: SAVE THE CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE-FOCUSED PROGRAM IN PREDOMINANTLY RURAL COMMUNITIES

This session will describe the Early Steps to School Success (ESSS), a home-visiting program for parents and children ages 0 to 3 offered mainly in rural areas across the United States. Sites in Nebraska are part of a national evaluation to determine effects of the program on children's language outcomes. Preliminary results show children's language outcomes approaching national averages. The national evaluation will provide a comparison group and track language outcomes for the kindergarten population at school entry.

### **Helen Raikes, PhD**

Willa Cather Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Raikes conducts research focused on child care quality, workforce characteristics and early literacy. She is Co-PI for the Save the Children: Early Steps to School Success Evaluation and was a state-level principal investigator in a five-state Quality Intervention in Early Care and Education study. Dr. Raikes provides consultation to the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the EHS Research and Evaluation Project, and the Bounce Learning Network.

## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Amanda Witte, MA**

Project Manager of CBC in Rural Communities  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION II: EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

HUSKER ROOM

1:30 - 3 PM

## IMPROVING MATH EDUCATION IN NEBRASKA PRIMARY CLASSROOMS THROUGH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NEBRASKAMATH PROJECT

This session will describe Primarily Math, which is the early childhood component of NebraskaMATH, a math education improvement project. Highlights of early findings will be presented, including the relationship between children's competency beliefs and math performance; the impact of teacher professional development on leadership and beliefs about mathematics teaching; and the program's effects on family-school partnerships and communication.

### **Carolyn Pope Edwards, EdD**

Willa Cather Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies  
Willa Cather Professor of Psychology  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### **Wendy Smith, PhD**

Research Assistant Professor  
Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Edwards' research interests include social and moral development in cultural context, socialization processes within the family, and international early childhood education. She has conducted research and held research positions at universities in Italy, Norway and Kenya. She is currently part of the NebraskaMATH project and recently finished work with the UNL Getting Ready Project, which focused on strengthening parent-child, parent-educator and caregiver-educator relationships.

Dr. Smith's interests include PK-12 mathematics education; rural education; teacher change; teacher professional development; action research; teacher and student beliefs about, and attitudes toward, mathematics; and value-added models for estimating teacher effects on student achievement. Dr. Smith currently works with a number of grants related to mathematics education, including NebraskaMATH, NebraskaNOYCE and Data Connections.

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## IMPROVING READING AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN PREK THROUGH GRADE 3 SETTINGS: CONCEPTUAL BASES OF LANGUAGE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

The Language and Reading Research Consortium (LARRC) will be described. LARRC is a five-site, 14-investigator consortium funded by the Institute of Education Sciences' Reading for Understanding Initiative, the largest federally funded initiative to study literacy. LARRC's aims are to better understand the language bases of reading; create language-based reading comprehension classroom interventions for grades pre-K through 3; and test the effectiveness of these interventions. Preliminary data will be presented with a focus on future implications.

### **Tiffany Hogan, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Special Education and Communication Disorders  
Director of Link N Literacy Lab: Linking Language & Literacy  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Hogan is a speech-language pathologist interested in the relationship between lexical development and reading acquisition, with an aim of improving early identification and treatment of reading disabilities. She studies the genetic, neurological and behavioral links between oral and written language development, with a focus on co-morbid speech and language disorders.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Tonia Durden, PhD**

Early Childhood Extension Specialist  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

# RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

SESSION II: EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

NIOBRARA ROOM

1:30 - 3 PM

## PRESCHOOLERS' ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD PEERS WITH DISABILITIES IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

This presentation will share results from a study examining children's attitudes toward their peers with disabilities. Children's cognitive attitudes toward people with disabilities were positively related to their affective attitudes and their prior experience. In addition, children were more likely to include peers with disabilities in their play (a) if the disability did not interfere with the ongoing activity and (b) when they had a better understanding about people with disabilities. Preliminary results from a follow-up study examining preschoolers' behavior toward peers with disabilities – along with teacher behavior and talk – will also be shared.

### **Soo-Young Hong, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Hong's research interests encompass two key areas in early childhood education and development: (a) early childhood educational interventions and their relation to, or effect on, young children's learning of science concepts and scientific problem-solving skills; and (b) typically developing children's attitudes and behavior toward peers with disabilities in inclusive settings. She aims to develop effective early childhood professional development programs in these two areas to enhance children's learning and development, as well as teachers' efficacy in educating young children.

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## CHILDREN'S TEMPERAMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Children bring unique sets of temperamental characteristics, such as shyness and attention, to the classroom; these characteristics play a role in how children interact with teachers and peers. This presentation focuses on the interplay of child temperament and classroom processes as they predict children's social and academic outcomes; it also points to specific classroom processes that may optimize goodness of fit between children and the classroom environment.

### **Kathleen Moritz Rudasill, PhD**

Associate Professor of Educational Psychology  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Rudasill's research focuses on the impacts of individual and contextual differences in children's development on their academic and social outcomes. She specifically seeks to understand how children's temperaments relate to their success and how classroom processes (e.g., student-teacher interactions) moderate and mediate this relationship. Dr. Rudasill also investigates the socio-emotional processes that affect outcomes for gifted students, examining these students' self-concept, social coping and academic planning.

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## SESSION FACILITATOR

### **Kristin Rispoli, PhD**

Postdoctoral Fellow  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



# PANEL & ROUNDTABLE

LINCOLN BALLROOM

3:10 - 3:45 PM

Following the second session of research presentations, attendees will convene in the Lincoln Ballroom to hear remarks from panel discussants representing early childhood policy, training and practice. Discussants will share reactions to the information presented in the research sessions; address related links to policy, training and practice; and highlight gaps in current research, policy, training and practice collaborations that would benefit the field of early childhood in Nebraska and beyond.

## PANEL DISCUSSANTS

### **Tracy Gordon, BA**

Co-Executive Director  
Nebraska AEYC

### **Jennifer M. Hernandez, MSW**

Policy Associate  
First Five Nebraska

### **Eleanor Kirkland, MA, CSW**

Director of Head Start Early Childhood Systems  
Head Start State Collaboration Office

### **Dawn Mollenkopf, PhD**

Associate Professor of Teacher Education  
University of Nebraska-Kearney

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## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The panel will be followed by small-group discussions, during which attendees will be asked to share their reactions to the research presentations and respond to a list of prepared questions.

# PRESENTER CONTACT INFO

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