



*CYFS Early Childhood*  
**RESEARCH SUMMIT**

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*Creating Connections Among Research, Practice & Policy in Nebraska*

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**Research Presentation Summaries  
& Attendee List**

Concurrent Session 1		10:30 - 11:15 a.m.
A2	<p><b><i>Ice Jams, Fungi, Roly-Polys: Enhancing Knowledge to Enrich Science Talk</i></b> Soo-Young Hong, Lisa Poppe, LaDonna Werth, Sarah Paulos, Maddie Pieper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood educators may benefit from strengthened ability to build science and engineering content knowledge and confidence in guiding young children’s scientific investigation.</li> <li>• Early childhood science and engineering professional learning should include resources, support, and explicit guidance for integrating science talk into everyday interactions with children in early childhood settings to address early childhood educators’ desire to know more about science and engineering concepts and practices.</li> <li>• The process of co-creating professional learning experiences with colleagues from multiple disciplines can generate challenges; however, it is critically important to continue the conversation to develop approaches and resources that are scientifically accurate, developmentally appropriate, and contextually relevant.</li> </ul>
A3	<p><b><i>Tracking Early Disparities Statewide in Nebraska</i></b> Abbie Raikes, Katelyn Hepworth, Gladys Haynes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable, population-level data on early child development, birth to age 5, is possible to collect and use to inform policy and programs in states, counties and communities.</li> <li>• These data uncovered several sources of group-level disparities in child development in Nebraska, including food and economic insecurity, home learning activities and parent stress.</li> <li>• This information can be used to inform statewide and community-level policies to support families and report on impacts from large-scale programs.</li> </ul>
B1	<p><b><i>Supports Needed by Early Childhood Professionals to Complete Degrees and Certification</i></b> Julia Torquati, Victoria Johnson, Simin Kazemi, Lisa Knoche, Nancy Engin-Wedin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RESPECT Across Nebraska is a collaborative partnership among institutions of higher education, early childhood professionals and local communities working together to advance equity and inclusion in early childhood teacher preparation in Nebraska (<a href="http://respectacrossnebraska.org">respectacrossnebraska.org</a>).</li> <li>• Interviews and surveys with educators in Nebraska indicate that those who are working full time need financial support to cover costs of education as well as time to complete coursework.</li> <li>• The experiences, or pathways, for early childhood educators vary widely. From motivations to enter the field, through the access points that have made their pathways possible, each interview has highlighted the importance of creating new pathways that are flexible enough to hold space for individual complexities.</li> <li>• Mentorship grounded in empathy and characterized by flexibility along with a network of support from supervisors, families and friends encourages persistence in early childhood preparation programs that contributes to educators’ sense of community and belonging. These experiences create a safety net to prevent attrition from preparation programs and build confidence and perceived value in their role.</li> </ul>
B2	<p><b><i>Coaching in Early Intervention: Promoting High-Quality Home Visits with Families</i></b> Lisa Knoche, Rachel Schachter, Gwen Nugent, Sue Bainter, Christina Kilgore, Janice Lee, Amy Bunnell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching in Early Intervention (CEI) is an OSEP-funded model demonstration project conducted in partnership with the Nebraska Early Development Network to create a multi-level coaching infrastructure that will support use of evidence-based practices in early intervention for infants/toddlers with disabilities and their families. For more information, visit: <a href="http://cei.unl.edu">cei.unl.edu</a>.</li> <li>• Data show that coaches are using evidence-based coaching practices during coaching conversations and are satisfied with support; early intervention personnel have improved use of evidence-based practices; and families are satisfied with services.</li> <li>• Coaches working with EI personnel need structures, guidance and support to initiate, implement and sustain effective coaching.</li> </ul>



Concurrent Session 2		11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
A1	<p><b><i>Adapting and Refining the CHIME Program in Early Care and Education</i></b> Carrie Clark, Jaci Foged, Amanda Prokasky</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnering with Head Start and Early Head Start settings to co-develop and assess the efficacy of the Cultivating Healthy, Intentional, Mindful Educators (CHIME) intervention, some promising initial findings indicate that the intervention is highly acceptable and reduces educator burnout, although evidence for its effects on educators' psychological well-being is less clear.</li> <li>• Conducting research to determine CHIME's feasibility and effectiveness in Head Start settings under rigorous clinical trials standards has proven difficult, given challenges associated with randomization of staff to treatment vs. control groups, as well as institutional factors such as staff shortages.</li> <li>• Successful efforts to implement internally sustainable programs that enhance early educator well-being will demand attention to institutional resources and administrative buy-in, which vary dramatically across Head Start centers.</li> </ul>
A2	<p><b><i>Omaha Urban Thinkscapes: Play Happens Everywhere</i></b> Debora Wisneski, Kristina Stamatis, Kathleen Knudsen, Metro Omaha Education Consortium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Omaha Urban Thinkscapes Project employs a community-based participatory research design to engage two communities to inform the design and construction of playful learning public spaces in their neighborhoods through their ways of playing.</li> <li>• Findings from family and community play events show the perspectives of play and public spaces of parents, children and community leaders. Accessibility, family and culture, and literacy and STEM experiences were valued.</li> <li>• Centering the perspectives of children and families in the context of community and culture reframes how we understand play in the academy and with early childhood education.</li> </ul>
A3	<p><b><i>Learning Frontiers: Promoting Equitable and Effective Early Learning in PreK-Grade 3</i></b> Amanda Witte, Lisa Knoche, Susan Sheridan, Natalie Koziol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Frontiers was a large-scale investigation that took place in Nebraska between 2016-2022. The goal of this work was to gain a better understanding of areas that are open to change or improvement to inform practice and policy decisions that support equitable and effective early learning opportunities for all students.</li> <li>• The results of 3 interrelated studies identified three primary impact areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classroom Experiences &amp; Learning Opportunities</li> <li>○ Relationships</li> <li>○ Sustained High-Quality Experiences</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Schools and students may benefit from focused efforts to promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Affordable high-quality early learning experiences</li> <li>○ Sustained positive teacher-child and parent-teacher relationships</li> <li>○ Aligned practices across the Pre-K to 3rd grade continuum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
B1	<p><b><i>It Takes a Village: Using Data to Strengthen Research-Practice Partnerships</i></b> Clariebelle Gabas, Karla Bohl, Jolene Johnson, Jamalia Jones, Amy LaPointe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust and diverse measures to track and examine classroom quality and student outcomes can be used to guide and inform instructional strategies that account for children's varying needs, skills, and development across the school year.</li> <li>• Successful RPPs in early childhood require a shared vision as well as a balance of the knowledge and experiences brought in by practitioners, researchers, and the families being served by programs.</li> <li>• This session provides a real-world example of RPPs models that can inform policy development to support additional projects.</li> </ul>



<b>B2</b>	<p><b>Assessment Practices in Rural Head Start When Children Speak Spanish</b> Ehi Edokhamhen, Kelcie Burke, Mark Reid, Marisa Macy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who speak multiple languages have special needs compared to monolingual children. This includes access to linguistically valid assessment services.</li> <li>• Nine teachers evaluated nine Spanish speaking children transitioning to Kindergarten on the AEP-3 Ready Set and those scores were evaluated for interrater reliability with parent reported scores on the Family Assessment of Child Skills (FACS) of the Ready Set.</li> <li>• Mean scores on the children's skills across eight domains/areas tended to show a strong degree of congruency between parents of Spanish speaking children and their mono-lingual Head Start teachers. Overall, there was a positive correlation between teachers' and parents' scores across most domains, indicating agreement in assessment.</li> <li>• Findings highlight the importance of understanding assessment practices in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts to ensure a smooth transition as children grow and develop.</li> </ul>
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<b>Concurrent Session 3</b>		<b>1:45 - 2:30 p.m.</b>
<b>A1</b>	<p><b>Family Cohesion and Children's Cognitive Development Amid Economic Hardship</b> Jenna Finch, Kimia Akhvein</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explored the impact of economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic on children's cognitive development through parental well-being and parent-child interaction quality.</li> <li>• Highlight family cohesion as a compensatory factor, supporting children's executive function and vocabulary skills amidst economic hardship.</li> <li>• Emphasize the importance of a family systems approach in early childhood practice and policy to support positive parent-child interactions in low-income households and enhance children's cognitive development.</li> </ul>
<b>A1</b>	<p><b>Research to Practice: Improving Family Engagement via Getting Ready</b> Lisa Knoche, Tammi Hechtner-Galvin, Katie Zabel, Jenny Benson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting Ready is an evidence-based family engagement approach comprised of eight strategies and a collaborative structure for use by educators during family contacts. Getting Ready strengthens adult-child relationships and parent-educator partnerships. For more information, visit: <a href="http://gettingready.unl.edu">gettingready.unl.edu</a>.</li> <li>• Getting Ready promotes positive outcomes in children and families when used across early childhood settings, including home visiting, family child care homes and center-based programs.</li> <li>• Getting Ready has recently been used in statewide system enhancement efforts (e.g., PDG and CRRSA). Data show that educators' family engagement skills and partnerships with families were positively affected, the approach was favorably received, and parent-child interactions were enhanced.</li> </ul>
<b>A1</b>	<p><b>Systems Implementation Support Promoting Positive Student Behavior: Early Childhood Alignment</b> Amanda Witte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), such as positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), have emerged as effective frameworks for addressing student needs and improving student outcomes. However, little is known about effective MTSS implementation practices across the PreK to elementary continuum.</li> <li>• A small (n=5) cohort of districts are receiving targeted implementation support to ensure evidence-based practices implementation. Support is provided by a team of regional implementation support specialists that includes early childhood MTSS facilitators.</li> <li>• The purpose of this presentation is to describe and examine the efforts of school teams to align their systems change approach across PreK and elementary school. Implementation barriers and facilitators are noted.</li> </ul>



A3	<p><b><i>Beyond Compensation: Burnout, Intent to Leave and ECE Workforce Well-being</i></b>          Alexandra Daro, Kate Sutton, Paula Thompson, Kristen Cunningham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation was not a significant predictor of intent to leave, but burnout was a significant predictor of intent to leave.</li> <li>• Compensation and benefits showed up in the focus group themes.</li> <li>• High burnout group received less annual compensation on average.</li> <li>• Well-being indicators were concerning across both groups.</li> </ul>
B2	<p><b><i>Using Goal Setting and Text Messaging to Support Quality Goals in Child Care</i></b>          Abbie Raiques, Jolene Johnson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A virtual quality observation can lead to actionable data to improve uptake of evidence-based practices.</li> <li>• A text-based goal setting with follow up messages leads to greater change in behavior than feedback alone.</li> <li>• Childcare educators with less access to professional development benefited the most from this intervention.</li> </ul>

Concurrent Session 4		2:45 - 3:30 p.m.
A2	<p><b><i>Early Childhood Professionals' Well-being and Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic</i></b>          Julia Torquati, Kathleen Gallagher, Tomi Olayemi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood professionals defined well-being as holistic, including physical, mental, social, and financial dimensions.</li> <li>• Early childhood professionals recognize that their well-being impacts the quality of the care and education they provide for young children and their families.</li> <li>• Early childhood professionals reported challenges meeting their own needs, for example, not having time to eat lunch or take bathroom breaks, and feeling exhausted every day.</li> </ul>
A3	<p><b><i>SUNRISE Nebraska Study: Assessing Preschoolers' Movement, Behaviors and Skills</i></b>          John Rech, Danae Dinkel, Priyanka Chaudhary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary aim of the SUNRISE study is to determine the proportion of preschool children sampled in participating countries who meet the WHO Global 24-hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years.</li> <li>• Findings from our study will provide an insight into how a representative sample of Nebraska's youth from urban and rural areas uniquely compare to the rest of the United States and the world, which could have influence on how we approach movement behavior development within the state of Nebraska's earliest education settings.</li> <li>• We will discuss the purpose of the SUNRISE Study specific to both the global effort and how we see this effort uniquely impacting the state of Nebraska. We will also highlight the rewards and ongoing challenges of being a part of a global study, how we have involved several student researchers, and share initial findings from SUNRISE collaborators from around the world.</li> </ul>
B1	<p><b><i>Measuring Collaboration Among Early Childhood Partners: A Mixed Methods Approach</i></b>          Kailey Snyder, Kristen Cunningham, Molly Goldberg, Junrong Lu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collaboration evaluation allows organizations to measure how effectively they work together to achieve shared goals.</li> <li>• Employing a mixed measures approach can allow organizational partners to strategically identify barriers and facilitators to collaboration.</li> <li>• The utilization of the collaboration evaluation framework can be replicated by interagency programs throughout Nebraska with the potential to enhance collaborative impact.</li> </ul>



B2	<p><b><i>Teacher Perceptions of the Early Literacy-Focused Nebraska WORDS Project</i></b>  Natalie Koziol, Derek Rodgers,  Michael Hebert, Rachel Schachter,  Janet Bohaty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicomponent early literacy programs like WORDS can help foster school-wide changes to how reading instruction is provided and assessed, making it more likely that students benefit from instruction.</li> <li>• Large-scale, collaborative projects among researchers, state agencies, and school districts are perceived by teachers to be meaningful and effective.</li> </ul>
B2	<p><b><i>The Role of Parents' Traditional Masculinity Ideology in Emotion Socialization</i></b>  Patty Kuo, Emily Starr, Monique Miller</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Educational Resources: The results from this study could be utilized to develop educational resources and materials that encourage children's emotional expression without being limited by gender ideologies or stereotypes. These tools and materials could help caregivers and educators cultivate an accepting and supportive environment that supports all children's emotional needs and growth.</li> <li>• Professional Training Initiatives: Insights from this research could be used to advocate for the securing of funding for research and training programs that equip early childhood mental health professionals and family service practitioners with the skills to recognize and address the influence of gender ideologies in their work with families. This might also include the development and dissemination of best practice guidelines for professionals to support parents in the fostering of environments where children feel safe and comfortable expressing emotions.</li> <li>• Mental Health Professional Resources: Therapists and other mental health professionals could utilize this study as a basis for tackling internal misogyny within their clients. This can include family and couples therapy. This can include practices that could include practices for clients to think about their internal biases and how these show up in their lives.</li> </ul>



# Attendee List

<p><b>NICOLE ADAMS</b> <i>Project Coordinator</i> Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>JENNIFER ADHIMA</b> <i>Chief Program Officer</i> Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative</p>	<p><b>CARIE AHLGRIM</b> <i>Early Childhood Director</i> Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership</p>	<p><b>KIMIA AKHAVEIN</b> <i>Doctoral Student</i> Department of Developmental Psychology University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
<p><b>OLIVIA ALBERTS</b> <i>Reading Specialist</i> Office of Teaching, Learning &amp; Assessment Nebraska Department of Education</p>	<p><b>SUKAINA AL-HAMEDI</b> <i>Early Childhood Research Technician</i> Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>OLIVIA ARROYO KOTINEK</b> <i>Bilingual Child Development Program Evaluator</i> Munroe-Meyer Institute University of Nebraska Medical Center</p>	<p><b>SUE BAINTER</b> <i>Early Development Network State Coach</i> Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
<p><b>JASON BALL</b> <i>President</i> Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development Lincoln Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p><b>KATIE BASS</b> <i>Policy &amp; Research Advisor</i> First Five Nebraska</p>	<p><b>JACKLYN BELCHER</b> <i>Senior Lead of Reporting &amp; Data Visualization</i> Nebraska Children &amp; Families Foundation</p>	<p><b>JENNY BENSON</b> <i>Early Childhood Coach</i> Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
<p><b>CHANDRA BERLIN</b> <i>Early Childhood Coach</i> York Public Schools</p>	<p><b>JANET BOHATY</b> <i>Senior Research Associate</i> Nebraska WORDS University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>KARLA BOHL</b> <i>School Director</i> Educare Lincoln</p>	<p><b>JAMLICK BOSIRE</b> <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i> LEARN University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
<p><b>SAMANTHA BRADLEY</b> <i>Associate Vice President of Early Childhood Mental Health</i> Nebraska Children &amp; Families Foundation</p>	<p><b>SARA BRADY</b> <i>Research Analyst</i> First Five Nebraska</p>	<p><b>SHEILA BRODERSEN</b> <i>School Psychologist</i> Papillion La Vista Community Schools</p>	<p><b>MATT BROOKS</b> <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i> Department of Educational Psychology University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
<p><b>QUENTIN BROWN</b> <i>Executive Director</i> Educare Lincoln</p>	<p><b>EMMA BRUNKE</b> <i>Family-School Partnership Coach</i> Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>DEBRA BUCK</b> <i>Family Engagement Supervisor/Outreach Coordinator</i> Educare Lincoln</p>	<p><b>AMY BUNNELL</b> <i>Director of Early Childhood Special Education</i> Office of Special Education Nebraska Department of Education</p>





<p><b>CAROL BURK</b>  <i>Early Childhood Education Specialist</i>  Office of Early Childhood Education  Nebraska Department of Education</p>	<p><b>KELCIE BURKE</b>  <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i>  Department of Sociology  University of Nebraska at Kearney</p>	<p><b>PATRICIA CARDELLINI DE ALMEIDA</b>  <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i>  Department of Educational Psychology  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>CARLEE CARTER</b>  <i>Owner</i>  Little Cubs Daycare</p>
<p><b>JENÉ CHAPMAN</b>  <i>Program Specialist</i>  Office of Early Childhood Training Center  Nebraska Department of Education</p>	<p><b>PRIYANKA CHAUDHARY</b>  <i>Doctoral Student</i>  Department of Health &amp; Kinesiology  University of Nebraska at Omaha</p>	<p><b>LORI CHLEBORAD</b>  <i>Project Coordinator</i>  Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,  Families and Schools  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>MONICA CHRISTENSEN</b>  <i>Education Coach</i>  Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative</p>
<p><b>LAURI CIMINO</b>  <i>Step Up to Quality Director</i>  Step Up to Quality  Nebraska Department of Education</p>	<p><b>CARRIE CLARK</b>  <i>Associate Professor</i>  Department of Educational Psychology  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>LAMEAKIA COLLIER</b>  <i>COO</i>  Lincoln Community Foundation</p>	<p><b>AMY COLWELL</b>  <i>NeMTSS Early Childhood Implementation Facilitator</i>  Educational Service Unit 6</p>
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<p><b>LISA FRICKE</b>  <i>State Board Member</i>  Nebraska State Board of Education</p>	<p><b>LAURA FRITZ</b>  <i>Assistant Project Director</i>  Munroe-Meyer Institute  University of Nebraska Medical Center</p>	<p><b>CLARIEBELLE GABAS</b>  <i>Postdoctoral Researcher</i>  Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,  Families &amp; Schools  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>KATHLEEN GALLAGHER</b>  <i>Director, Research &amp; Evaluation</i>  Buffett Early Childhood Institute  University of Nebraska</p>
<p><b>MELEAH GAMVROUDIS</b>  <i>Director</i>  Office of Early Childhood  Nebraska Department of Education</p>	<p><b>ROOPAN MIRIAM GEORGE</b>  <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i>  Department of Nutrition and Health Sciences  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>AMY GETZ</b>  <i>Education Coach</i>  Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative</p>	<p><b>WALTER GILLIAM</b>  <i>Executive Director</i>  Buffett Early Childhood Institute  University of Nebraska</p>
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<p><b>ANDREA GRIJALVA</b>  <i>Home Visitor</i>  York Public Schools</p>	<p><b>BRITNEE GUTGSELL</b>  <i>Education Coach</i>  Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative</p>	<p><b>MAUREEN HALPENNY</b>  <i>Project Coordinator</i>  Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,  Families &amp; Schools  University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>	<p><b>NANCY HAMMEL</b>  <i>Digital Communications Specialist</i>  First Five Nebraska</p>
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<p><b>SARA HOWARD</b> <i>Policy Advisor</i> First Five Nebraska</p>	<p><b>KATHY HUBBARD</b> <i>Director of Early Childhood Education</i> Child Saving Institute</p>	<p><b>ROXANE HUMPHREY</b> <i>Partnership Education &amp; Special Services Manager</i> Head Start Educational Service Unit 13</p>	<p><b>DANIA JAVAID</b> <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i> Department of Educational Psychology University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p>
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