



2022-2023
**ANNUAL
REPORT**



NEBRASKA CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS



Theo Glover, grandson of Julie Erickson, CYFS administrative coordinator.

College of Education
& Human Sciences



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

For nearly two decades, the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools has been a hub for interdisciplinary research collaboration and partnership. It has been a place where research begins, grows, excels and impacts lives — from infancy to adulthood.

Together with our partners in research, practice and policy, we are taking on the ever-present social, behavioral and educational challenges facing Nebraska and our world.

Recent headlines tell the story: Teacher and child care provider shortages abound, often fueled by budget shortfalls and burnout. Accessibility to quality mental health care, both for children and adults, is a growing concern. Poverty remains prevalent in many communities, creating additional obstacles for children and their families.

Such concerns are addressed by conducting, supporting and sharing high-quality research that can offer solutions to issues that deeply affect people's lives.

Many of these solutions directly align with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's strategic initiatives of anti-racism and racial equity, early childhood education and development, health equity, and science and technology literacy. They also support the College of Education and Human Sciences' grand visions that encompass thriving young children, comprehensive health and well-being, and strong communities.

Stories featured in this report showcase life-changing research conducted by CYFS researchers. Recent work, spanning Nebraska, the U.S. and the globe, addresses critical issues such as special education teacher shortages, rural mental health support, parent-teacher relationships, student bullying, family mealtimes, child sex trafficking prevention and inclusive health care for refugees.

As we continue to grow in size, scope and reach, CYFS remains dedicated to addressing big challenges, fostering new ideas and bringing together researchers, practitioners, administrators and policymakers with the shared goal of empowering children, youth, families and schools. We invite you to dream with us.



Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Director, Nebraska Center for Research on
Children, Youth, Families & Schools

George Holmes University Professor of
Educational Psychology

Susan M. Sheridan

ABOUT CYFS

CYFS was founded in 2004 as an interdisciplinary research center within the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. CYFS receives support as a UNL Program of Excellence, and its research programs are funded through external grants and contracts.

CYFS conducts, supports and shares research in the following areas:

- Academic Intervention & Learning
- Early Education & Development
- Psychosocial Development & Social-Emotional Learning
- Research & Evaluation Methods
- Rural Education & Communities

Our mission is to impact lives through research that advances learning and development.



Kaiya and Theo Glover, grandchildren of Julie Erickson, CYFS administrative coordinator.

Our vision is that all children, youth, families and schools have the opportunity to realize their potential and reach beyond.

We conduct research through grant-funded programs, provide comprehensive research support, and share research findings across audiences and platforms.

GRAND CHALLENGES

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln has identified seven grand challenge thematic areas in which to focus its expertise and resources, as outlined in its N2025 Strategic Plan. CYFS is uniquely positioned to leverage interdisciplinary research and collaboration in the social, behavioral and educational sciences to positively impact these major societal challenges:

- Anti-racism and racial equity
- Climate resilience
- Early childhood education and development
- Health equity
- Quantum science and engineering
- Science and technology literacy for society
- Sustainable food and water security

The Chancellor’s Office and the Office of Research and Economic Development have committed \$40 million over four years to invest in strategic, goal-based solutions that align with the grand challenges initiative.

Learn more about the Catalyst awards and planning grants recently awarded to CYFS researchers on page 04.

CONTENTS

- 2023–2024 UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition Grants ••••• 04
- Partnership aims to diversify, strengthen Nebraska’s early childhood workforce ••••• 05
- Researchers, educators explore ways to prevent child sex trafficking ••••• 06
- Get SET Nebraska addresses special education teacher shortage ••••• 08
- Research examines effects of positive mealtimes for children ••••• 10
- Study explores bullying that targets students with disabilities ••••• 11
- Research effort leverages STEM to inspire climate awareness, action ••••• 12
- Peaceful Means project helps prevent sexual violence among Indigenous youth ••••• 14
- Global toolkit promotes inclusive health care for marginalized refugees ••••• 16
- Equity-focused research hub bridges gap between university, communities ••••• 17
- TAPP project delivers strong results for Latinx students, parents ••••• 18
- ‘Homegrown’ training approach addresses need for rural mental health professionals ••••• 20
- 2022–2023 Layman Awards ••••• 22
- Landscape of Support ••••• 24
- Active Grants & Contracts ••••• 26
- Affiliates & Personnel ••••• 28

The research projects featured in this report are housed in CYFS. Learn more about our research support services at cyfsgrant.unl.edu.

UNL GRAND CHALLENGES

2023-2024 CATALYST COMPETITION GRANTS

The Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition, part of a \$40 million commitment by the Office of the Chancellor and the Office of Research and Economic Development, enables new interdisciplinary projects to move the needle toward the development of solutions for some of humanity's most significant problems and pressing opportunities.

Two Grand Challenges grants were awarded to CYFS faculty and affiliates in 2023.

CATALYST AWARD



“Inspiring Outcomes for Children Through Equitable Early Childhood Education Experiences”

Nearly 28 million children in the U.S. experience major childhood adversity. Events such as neglect, substance abuse, mental illness, racism and bias introduce significant stress to children's developing brains, putting them at risk for academic difficulties and health and behavioral issues — all of which have consequences into adulthood.

Lisa Knoche

Co-Director, CYFS; Research Associate Professor, CYFS

For this five-year, \$3.44 million Catalyst Award project, Lisa Knoche will lead a large-scale program to deliver proven, evidence-based interventions in early childhood settings using diverse, novel methods across the behavioral

sciences, and arts and humanities.

The interventions aim to boost children's social and emotional skills, which offer protective factors that improve resilience and reduce the risk of future problems. The project also supports development of an innovative, equitable method for measuring children's social-emotional skills.

The project team — which includes 19 faculty, plus university, state and community partners spread across several Nebraska communities — will promote skills in family engagement and deliver mental wellness programs designed to prepare educators to address the needs of children while reducing professional burnout.

PLANNING GRANT



“Developing an Interdisciplinary Global Forced Migration and Health Collaborative”

More than 115 million people across the globe have fled their homes due to persecution, war and climate disasters. Forcible displacement has acute and lasting physical, mental and social health consequences, making forced migration and health a key 21st century challenge that requires collaborative, international solutions.

Julie Tippens

Associate Professor, Child, Youth and Family Studies

To address this call, Julie Tippens has helped assemble a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Amref Health Africa, Amref International University and Moi University in Kenya. UNL will serve as the hub for this global collaborative through an organizational structure comprising three core areas: Research, Teaching and Engagement/Extension.

For this Planning grant, researchers will engage in partnership-strengthening activities and discussions, document forced migration and health priorities among diverse stakeholders, and provide collaboration and exchange opportunities for faculty, staff and students from the U.S. and Kenya. Such international collaborations have high potential to enhance health equity among forcibly displaced populations.

PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO DIVERSIFY, STRENGTHEN NEBRASKA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE



Nebraska, like other states, faces a shortage of early childhood professionals to meet its demand for quality care and education.

Researchers, educators and community partners from across the state are working to find a lasting solution to support, expand and diversify the early childhood workforce to ensure positive developmental outcomes for children birth to age 8, while strengthening families and communities.

The three-year collaborative, statewide initiative is underway to create an accessible, inclusive and sustainable system for preparing diverse early childhood professionals who will provide quality care and education for Nebraska children and families.

Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers (RESPECT) Across Nebraska is a collaboration among multiple institutions and communities that seeks to transform the culture of early childhood teacher preparation to be more equitable and inclusive.

RESPECT Across Nebraska will develop a competency-based framework that will ultimately make it easier to earn a bachelor's degree or teaching certificate.



Julia Torquati, principal investigator

“While many early childhood educators in Nebraska have degrees, many have collections of credits — but no degree,” said Julia Torquati, professor of child, youth and family studies, and the project's principal investigator. “We want to align higher education curricula and teacher certification standards to statewide-accepted competencies to enable educators to stay on track and finish their programs.”

With UNL serving as the lead entity, partners will collaborate to address barriers to higher education and a lack of accessible educational opportunities for career advancement — all of which hinder recruiting and retaining the diverse, skilled, informed workforce needed to provide high-quality early care and education to all Nebraska children.

The partnership includes six institutions of higher education, including three in the University of Nebraska system — the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Kearney and

the University of Nebraska at Omaha — and three additional colleges, including Little Priest Tribal College, the Nebraska Indian Community College and Metropolitan Community College. Along with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, other core partners in the project include the Nebraska Department of Education/Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services–Child Care Licensing and the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children.

This project is funded by grants from the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and Early Educator Investment Collaborative. Along with Torquati, other UNL researchers include Kelley Buchheister, associate professor of child, youth and family studies; Christine Kiewra, assistant professor of practice, child, youth and family studies; Nancy Engen-Wedin, lecturer, teaching, learning and teacher education; Soo-Young Hong, associate professor of child, youth and family studies; Lisa Knoche, CYFS co-director and research associate professor; Amanda Morales, associate professor, teaching, learning and teacher education; and Rachel Schachter, associate professor of child, youth and family studies.

RESEARCHERS, EDUCATORS EXPLORE WAYS TO PREVENT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Although sex trafficking of children is a significant crisis in the U.S., little research has been done to explore prevention. A partnership between the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and Iowa’s largest school district is exploring ways to address the challenge.

Nebraska researchers are collaborating with Des Moines Public Schools on a five-year project — Project LIVE (Love, Inclusivity, Values, Education) — that aims to prevent sex trafficking of children by delivering a new curriculum to high school students and staff in the district.

The READY to Stand Curriculum, developed by The Set Me Free Project, is designed to help prevent sex trafficking, particularly among racially and ethnically diverse children. The curriculum, which is used in about 400 schools across Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota, provides information on healthy relationships, safe people and resources, self-esteem and social media safety.

Sex trafficking of children includes a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for financial benefit, or



Nia Clark, project consultant, talks to participants.

in exchange for anything of value, such as food or money. Research suggests that such exploitation disproportionately impacts youth of color and youth living in poverty.

READY to Stand is presented to students through learning modules that use age-appropriate videos and group discussions led by trained adult program educators. Additionally, school personnel participate in a training module focused on effectively managing youth disclosures and rejecting all forms of violence, including sex

trafficking of children.

Katie Edwards, director of the Interpersonal Violence Research Laboratory and professor, CYFS and educational psychology, is leading efforts to evaluate the curriculum and ensure it is delivered effectively to participants. The project launched at two Des Moines high schools and will soon expand to six additional high schools.

“One of our top priorities is always the safety and well-being of our students,” said Matt Smith,

interim superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools. “This work between DMPS and the University of Nebraska will provide an important look at how schools can make a difference in addressing a critical issue — sex trafficking — and help us do more to make sure our students are safe, whether in or out of the classroom.”

Researchers are using student surveys to determine whether participation in READY to Stand reduces child sex trafficking, teen dating violence and sexual assault victimization and perpetration, and whether the program increases bystander intervention in exploitation situations.

Jennifer Stalder, program supervisor, hopes the project increases students’ awareness of human trafficking and relationships.

“Our main goal is to have more knowledgeable students who are able to notice things with their peers, and feel confident and strong enough to speak out if they see something going on,” she said. “We want them to recognize whether they or their friends are in unhealthy relationships, or whether they are in danger of being trafficked.”

For school staff, Stalder said, the goal is to spread awareness that sex trafficking can happen anywhere.

Findings will be reported to the community, and will be presented in person at the CDC. Youth participants will be included in those presentations.

Kim Brady, curriculum development coordinator,



said the goal is to stop trafficking before it starts.

“The more awareness there is about human trafficking, the better chance we have to prevent it,” she said. “If we are able to get some solid information on how to prevent perpetration, we could be changing and saving lives.”

The project is funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Along with Edwards, other Nebraska researchers include Rochelle Dalla, professor of child, youth and family studies, and Lorey Wheeler, CYFS research associate professor and MAP Academy director. Along with Brady and Stalder, other Des Moines Public Schools personnel involved in the project include Stacie Nessa, licensed independent social worker.

Des Moines Public Schools students and teachers participate in a youth retreat.



“Our main goal is to have more knowledgeable students who are able to notice things with their peers, and feel confident and strong enough to speak out if they see something going on.”

GET SET NEBRASKA ADDRESSES SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER SHORTAGE



Get SET Nebraska is tailored to the needs of Nebraska special education teachers so we can keep those great teachers working in the field.

As in other states, Nebraska’s ability to deliver high-quality instruction to students served in special education depends on the availability of qualified teachers.

Unfortunately, shortages of special education teachers — both statewide and nationally — leave many students in individualized education programs at further risk for compromised educational outcomes. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 49 states and the District of Columbia reported shortages of special education teachers in 2021.

A team of Nebraska researchers and educators is working to establish a statewide program to develop and retain special education teachers.

Get SET Nebraska is a comprehensive mentorship and professional development program designed to support Nebraska special education teachers and school administrators serving students ages 3-21. It is designed to reduce teacher-reported job stress, increase job satisfaction, improve administrative support

and enhance teachers’ skills and confidence — all key to retaining special education teachers and ensuring schools can improve academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

“Special education teacher shortages are a real problem,” said Amanda Witte, CYFS research assistant professor. “Get SET Nebraska is tailored to the needs of Nebraska special education teachers so we can keep those great teachers working in the field. It is a desperately needed program.”

Get SET Nebraska was developed with data gathered from a fall 2020 project led by Witte and HyeonJin Yoon, MAP Academy research assistant professor, who surveyed 456 special education teachers from 86 school districts and 231 schools statewide.

They investigated available teacher preparation programs, in-service teacher supports and the connection between those supports and job satisfaction.

Data were used to identify steps school administrators could take to reduce stress and promote greater job satisfaction.

The program was piloted in four rural Nebraska schools during the 2022-23 academic year.



From left: HyeonJin Yoon, Pam Brezenski, Kris Elmshaeuser and Amanda Witte.

Each school’s participants included a school administrator, an experienced special education teacher as a mentor and a newer teacher paired with the mentor.

Before expanding Get SET Nebraska statewide, a larger trial will be implemented in 100 schools.

“We’re looking at a nice mix of rural and urban schools,” said Pam Brezenski, project manager.

“We’re getting a Nebraska-wide perspective.”

The expanded rollout will include online training modules designed to help administrators learn how best to support special education teachers, and for professional development of newer special education teachers.

“This program helps administrators see the unique needs of their special education teachers and the

importance of protecting their time,” Witte said.

For the teachers, the focus is on increasing knowledge and expertise.

“Special education is a large field; you can’t know everything,” Brezenski said. “Some special education teachers feel buried, but our program provides them with the information they need to be able to answer questions — and know who to contact for answers — so they feel empowered to make decisions.”

Brezenski notes that Get SET Nebraska focuses on teacher strengths, and enables teachers and mentors to work together to identify areas in which additional support or experiences are needed.

“Administrators know their teachers need support and are excited about this,” she said. “One of our participants said she wished the program had been in place earlier. I think this is fulfilling something everyone knows is necessary, but doesn’t necessarily have the time to build.”

The program’s greatest strength, Brezenski said, is that it can be tailored to meet the needs of schools and districts.

“The goal is to build something that can be used by every district,” she said. “Every teacher needs something different for their individual caseload. The ultimate goal is to ensure they feel successful, and self-efficacy is increased.”

The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education—Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), through a subaward from the Nebraska Department of Education. Along with Witte, Brezenski and Yoon, the research team includes Kris Elmshaeuser, project co-director and assistant state director of the Office of Special Education.

Jasmin Smith, principal investigator



RESEARCH EXAMINES EFFECTS OF POSITIVE MEALTIMES FOR CHILDREN

As any parent knows, children and vegetables aren't always a natural match. Research shows preschool-aged children are not receiving recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.

Dietary preferences are set early in life and continue throughout the lifespan. Poor diet is a risk factor for obesity, cancer, type II diabetes and other chronic diseases.

But eating habits can be changed.

A positive mealtime emotional climate is created through communication, warmth, nurturing and

group enjoyment. When children are at home, positive mealtime emotional climate has been associated with improving dietary intake.

As more and more children spend a significant amount of time in child care, research on mealtime emotional climate in family child care homes (FCCH) is needed to ensure children get the nutritional and emotional support they need to thrive.

"Through our systematic review, we found that positive mealtime emotional climate is linked to positive child outcomes, including healthy weight status, healthful dietary intake and lowered

disordered eating behaviors," said Jasmin Smith, graduate student in child development/early childhood education.

Smith and her faculty mentor, Dipti Dev, Betti and Richard Robinson associate professor of child, youth and family studies and Nebraska Extension specialist, are leading the Mealtime Emotional Climate in Childcare Observation Scales (MECCOS) project. Together they are exploring the impact of mealtime emotional climate in FCCHs which are prevalent in rural areas.

Nebraska has about 1,830 licensed FCCH providers and 902 large child care centers — ratios that are similar nationally, Dev said.

Data are being gathered through video recordings of mealtime interactions at about 100 participating FCCH sites in rural Nebraska.

Researchers will use findings to develop a toolkit for researchers to measure mealtime emotional climate in child care settings, and create videos for students and researchers to guide them with analyzing observations and data.

"Above all, we want to determine whether changing mealtime emotional climate can help improve a child's diet," Dev said.

Statewide stakeholders supporting the project include Nebraska Extension, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Department of Education, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Early Learning Connections.

This project is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Administration for Children and Families, and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Along with Smith and Dev, other research team members include Saima Hasnin, doctoral candidate in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies; and Carly Applegarth, EAT Family Style program manager.

STUDY EXPLORES BULLYING THAT TARGETS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Being bullied is not pleasant for anyone. But for students with disabilities, the effects can be more damaging — and the risk of bullying is disproportionately higher.

Bullying is a public health crisis linked to adverse educational and mental health outcomes such as poor grades, negative perceptions of school, depression and anxiety. Students with disabilities have a greater risk of being victimized, as well as having more social difficulties than peers without disabilities, and may be less responsive to existing bullying intervention programming.

Despite the potential of significant, long-term detrimental outcomes, little research has been done on these students' experiences and needs.

Miriam Crinion, doctoral student in educational psychology, is exploring the unique social experiences of adolescent students with disabilities who have been involved in bullying. She is particularly focused on the support systems and coping strategies that enable students to manage bullying behaviors.

"I'm passionate about students with disabilities who have been marginalized for so long — both in society and the education system," she said.

Through interviews, Crinion is gathering data



Miriam Crinion, doctoral student

from 15 students with disabilities who have completed Target Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP), a free individualized program housed in the Nebraska Bullying Prevention and Intervention Laboratory, directed by Susan Swearer, chair of the Department of Educational Psychology and Crinion's faculty mentor.

The program is designed for students ages 7-18 who are involved in bullying. Supervised trained specialists conduct a three-hour cognitive-behavioral intervention tailored to specific student concerns, such as depression, anxiety, cognition and problem-solving. Specialists compile data, write reports and present findings to parents, teachers and others to help provide specific recommendations to stop bullying and restore relationships.

Crinion will use her findings to help researchers better understand the lived experiences — particularly the social challenges — of students with disabilities who have been bullied. This will enable school psychologists to identify and improve evidence-based psychosocial support programming and create safe, supportive school environments for students with disabilities.

"I've seen how these students struggle to make and keep friends," she said. "I want to do anything I can to help them have better social experiences at school."

The project is funded by a Society for the Study of School Psychology dissertation grant.



From left: Susan Weller, Sarah Roberts, Ana María Vélez Arango, Louise Lynch-O'Brien and Holly Hatton-Bowers.

RESEARCH EFFORT LEVERAGES STEM TO INSPIRE CLIMATE AWARENESS, ACTION

Many researchers now believe climate change poses the greatest global threat to human health — and that youth are the most vulnerable to its impacts and consequences, both today and in the future.

Black, Latinx, Native American and other youth of color may be disproportionately affected by climate change by forced migration and deepening inequalities in access to clean air and water, and healthy foods.

Ana María Vélez Arango, assistant professor of insect toxicology in the Department of Entomology, is leading an intercultural, interdisciplinary project that fosters STEM learning — science, technology, engineering and math — by drawing connections between insect resilience and human resilience.

The RISE with Insects (Resilience Ignited through Science and Ethics) project develops a learning camp curriculum for first and second graders using restorative healing practices, mindfulness, art and social-emotional learning. The program

also considers how those concepts relate to racism, privilege and the climate change crisis.

Researchers aim to engage youth, their families and communities in broader, systems-level thinking to be stewards of planetary health — and empower youth to take collective action to combat the climate crisis in Nebraska and beyond.

“Environmental health and human health are interconnected,” Vélez Arango said. “This project is not only focused on environmental change, but also on racial justice; it’s all connected. People need to think about the consequences of their actions, both in terms of the environment and how we can affect others.”

Because team members possess expertise in a range of specialties — entomology, mindfulness, art and exhibit presentation, ethnic communities — the project will blend disciplines to create an inclusive curriculum.

“Everyone on this team has particular strengths,” said Louise Lynch-O’Brien, assistant professor of insect biology and Nebraska Extension specialist.

“As a group, we are going to use several different perspectives to figure out what will work best. In the next year, we’ll all come out a little different.”

Researchers are working with Lincoln’s Malone Center, Asian Community and Cultural Center, and El Centro de Las Américas to help create a curriculum that will work across different communities and cultures.

Vélez Arango said the project’s use of insects — most likely butterflies, caterpillars and Madagascar hissing cockroaches — will appeal to children.

“Insects tend to be fun for kids,” Vélez Arango said. “There are big differences between monarch butterflies and hissing cockroaches, so we can show how some insects are beautiful and some are a little scarier. But we can teach that just because something is different, it doesn’t mean it’s bad or ugly.”

The project’s focus on similarities between insect and human resilience is important, said Holly Hatton-Bowers, associate professor of child, youth and family studies and Nebraska Extension specialist.

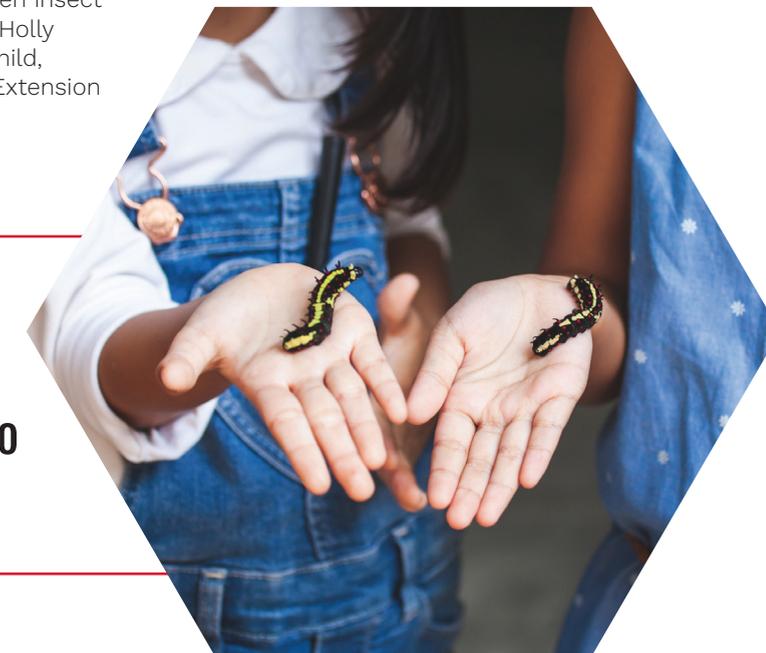
“You can go outside and find insects co-existing with us,” she said. “There is an interdependence with living things. That is a beautiful metaphor for what we are trying to teach youth.”

The project is funded by a 2021-22 UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition Planning grant. Along with Vélez Arango, Hatton-Bowers and Lynch-O’Brien, the research team includes Maria Elena Oliveri, research associate professor, Buross Center for Testing; Susan Weller, director of the University of Nebraska State Museum; and Sandra Williams, associate professor of art.

Additional team members include Emily Brown, education supervisor at the University of Nebraska State Museum; Helen Abdali Soosan Fagan, assistant professor of practice in agricultural leadership, education and communication; Jody Green, extension educator in entomology; and Sarah Roberts, extension educator in science and nature education for early childhood. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl, NoVo Foundation endowed chair in social and emotional learning at the University of Illinois, also collaborates on the project.



You can go outside and find insects co-existing with us. There is an interdependence with living things. That is a beautiful metaphor for what we are trying to teach youth.



Peaceful Means float at the Oglala Nation Parade held at the Pine Ridge Reservation.



Jeremiah Braveheart and Rebecca Lone Elk, program facilitators teach the IMpower program in Rapid City, South Dakota.

PEACEFUL MEANS PROJECT HELPS PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG INDIGENOUS YOUTH

For the past six years, Nebraska educational psychologist Katie Edwards has worked with Native American communities and organizations to combat sexual violence — a trauma Indigenous peoples experience at rates higher than any other racial or ethnic group in the U.S.

“Violence among Indigenous peoples is rooted in colonization and multiple historical traumas, as well as ongoing systemic racism and oppression,” said Edwards, director of the Interpersonal Violence Research Laboratory and professor, CYFS and educational psychology. “Despite this, Indigenous peoples are highly resilient — something that is attributed to their connection to their cultures. So there is increasing recognition that effective prevention efforts for Indigenous peoples need to be culturally grounded.”

Now, with funding from a 2021-22 UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Award, Edwards is co-leading a four-year project to establish an Indigenous-led sexual violence prevention initiative on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

For Native American communities throughout the U.S., sexual violence remains a significant problem. Its negative impacts have spanned generations of Indigenous peoples.

“Sexual violence is a crisis in Indian Country,” said Norma Rendon, Oglala Lakota and executive director of Winyan Wicayuonihan Oyanke (“Where All Women are Honored”), a domestic violence shelter in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The Indigenous-led project is called Wahwala lyohlogya, which translates to “Peaceful Means.” It will create jobs, provide training and education opportunities, and bring the IMpower, an evidence-based sexual violence prevention program to K-12 youth at Pine Ridge. With community input and guidance, IMpower will be culturally adapted.

Developed in 2009 by Lee Paiva, founder and executive director of No Means No Worldwide and IMpower United, IMpower is an evidence-based, comprehensive sexual violence prevention

“ Indigenous peoples are highly resilient — something that is attributed to their connection to their cultures.”

program and support system for survivors.

Results from a recently completed pilot evaluation of IMpower on a Native American reservation in South Dakota demonstrated that a culturally adapted curriculum reduced rates of sexual violence by 80%.

Peaceful Means aims to reduce sexual violence among Indigenous persons throughout the U.S., and to provide all Indigenous K-12 youth with the opportunity to receive the culturally adapted version of IMpower by 2050.

The project relies on community engagement and coordination activities, cultural adaptation of IMpower and intensive staff training in program adaptation, implementation and evaluation.

Once staff members are trained, they will lead a communitywide implementation and evaluation of IMpower on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Staff will work with Indigenous community members and partnering agencies in South Dakota and Nebraska to adapt, implement and evaluate IMpower in each community. They will also host training events and seminars, and will share their findings with researchers, practitioners, policymakers and community members.

The project also includes a youth-led documentary that will follow the establishment of Peaceful Means and the implementation of IMpower.

Throughout the project, all research will be done after receiving tribal approval. Tribes will own the data from their respective communities.

Damon Leader Charge, director of tribal outreach at the University of South Dakota, said Peaceful Means will play a significant role in chipping away at historical and intergenerational traumas Indigenous people have suffered.

As the oldest of six siblings, he saw abuse in his own family.

“I could have become a statistic,” Leader Charge said. “But I was raised by countless, beautiful, strong women on both sides of my family to know that kind of treatment was wrong.”

Along with Edwards, UNL team members include Lorey Wheeler, CYFS research associate professor and director of the MAP Academy; Ramona Herrington, cultural outreach manager, IVRL; Theodore Hibbeler, tribal education and engagement Extension educator; and dozens of postdoctoral, graduate and undergraduate student scholars.

GLOBAL TOOLKIT PROMOTES INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE FOR MARGINALIZED REFUGEES

In recent years, there has been an increase in global initiatives aimed at providing mental health support in low- and middle-income countries for those affected by disaster, conflict and forced migration.

However, older refugees and refugees with disabilities have received less attention in humanitarian research and often face barriers to accessing wellness-promoting interventions.

Julie Tippens, associate professor of child, youth and family studies, and Angela Palmer-Wackerly, associate professor of health communication, are participating in a collaborative, international project designed to address this critical gap among marginalized refugees with the creation and evaluation of an interactive research toolkit — “HESHIMA: A Guide to Collaborative and Inclusive Health Research in Humanitarian Settings.”



From left: Lucy Njiru, Julie Tippens, Angela Palmer-Wackerly and Alice Lakati.

“Heshima” is Kiswahili for respect or dignity. For this project, the HESHIMA acronym stands for “Honoring Experiences and Shared Humanity in Mobilizing for Action.”

The project is a collaboration among researchers, humanitarian and human rights personnel, and refugee stakeholders.

Partners include the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Amref Health Africa, Amref International University, the Albinism Society of Kenya, HelpAge International-Kenya and an advisory board consisting of older refugees and refugees with disabilities.

Tippens and Palmer-Wackerly will collaborate with the advisory board and other partners to co-produce the toolkit, which will include guidance on participatory research procedures, such as research ethics, partnership development and tools for recruitment, data collection and dissemination.

Data will be collected from refugees living in Nairobi, Kenya. Refugees living in cities and towns outside of refugee camps lack access to the typical humanitarian supports provided in a camp, such as food, water, housing, health care and other necessities.

Information about what matters most to refugee partners and participants will be used to create the research toolkit and to enhance humanitarian responses in urban settings.

“We want to develop tools that highlight strengths and focus on what inclusion and participation means to refugees themselves,” Tippens said.

This project is funded by a grant from the ELRHA (Enhanced Learning & Research for Humanitarian Assist) Humanitarian Innovation Fund.



From left: Sarah Zuckerman, Megan Kelley, Virginia Chaidez and Trey Andrews.

EQUITY-FOCUSED RESEARCH HUB BRIDGES GAP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY, COMMUNITIES

Years ago, when Sarah Zuckerman worked as a special education teacher in Washington, D.C., she saw firsthand the myriad educational and health needs her students brought with them to school.

Increasing access to more nutritious food, medical care and mental health services seemed to be constant needs she saw every day.

“I knew there was only so much I could do,” said Zuckerman, associate professor of educational administration. “That ultimately was one of the

things that prompted me to pursue a Ph.D.”

Now, Zuckerman is leading a project that leverages collaboration among researchers, practitioners and community members to reduce educational and health inequities in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Community Action Research for Equity and Sustainability (NE CARES) Hub will provide infrastructure and support for collaborative, interdisciplinary networks to identify problems and develop new pathways to solve them.

The first step in reducing educational and health disparities, Zuckerman said, is to remove barriers that hinder collaboration among researchers, such as traditional research paradigms, time restraints and knowledge gaps.

Researchers will connect people across Nebraska to discuss their experiences in inequities, challenges in their communities and ways to partner with the university. A community advisory board will be developed to gather statewide input.

“We want to empower the university to truly be a university for the people,” Chaidez said.

Co-principal investigator Megan Kelley, assistant professor of nutrition and health sciences, noted that because researchers and community partners often operate from different viewpoints, “we want to help bridge that gap to help researchers and communities identify possibilities.”

“We need to know what’s important to people in each research community,” she said. “So we’re looking for things to help build better infrastructure to support everyone working together successfully.”

Kelley said timelines and requirements to report findings and outcomes sometimes become obstacles to the success of grant-funded, community-based projects.

“Once it’s over, it’s too easy to let those relationships dissipate,” she said. “That can be destabilizing and demoralizing for people who put in a lot of time helping you. If you’re not intentional about it, it’s easy to lose track. We want to create this space for online relationships and letting people know they have a place where they can connect.”

The project is funded by a 2021-22 UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition Planning grant. Along with Zuckerman, Chaidez and Kelley, other researchers for the project include Trey Andrews, associate professor of ethnic studies and psychology.

TAPP PROJECT DELIVERS STRONG RESULTS FOR LATINX STUDENTS, PARENTS



From left: Lorey Wheeler, co-principal investigator, and Susan Sheridan, principal investigator.

Traditionally, minoritized ethnic-racial groups have been excluded or significantly underrepresented from participating in research. According to some estimates, 96% of psychological studies come from countries with only 12% of the world's population, and tend to include mostly white participants.

Such underrepresentation can lead to assumptions that behaviors and values of the majority culture are “normal,” while those of other cultures are problematic.



We tend to impose things in education that work for white, middle-class Americans without thinking about how it fits for people from other cultures who care just as deeply about their children and their future.

To address this disparity, University of Nebraska researchers recently completed a five-year project — TAPP para Familias Latinas — that focused on strengthening and supporting partnerships among parents and teachers of Latinx students.

The project was developed on the foundation of Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP), a research-based, problem-solving and decision-making intervention developed by CYFS Director Susan Sheridan and other Nebraska researchers.

TAPP builds on student strengths while fostering collaboration among parents and teachers, and has been proven to enhance students' academic, behavioral and social outcomes while strengthening parent-teacher relationships.

TAPP para Familias Latinas found that emphasizing shared goals and commonalities generated better communication and connection among students, parents and teachers — even with existing language and cultural differences.

Those stronger home-school relationships enhanced students' learning and behaviors, and improved parent-teacher collaboration.

“Fundamentally, TAPP is an intervention about relationships, so we expected this might be a good fit for Latinx students and their families,” Sheridan said. “Latinx families have more home-based education, and learn in more relationship-oriented ways. We have to value the strengths these families bring to the table, and a partnership approach such as TAPP does that.”

Project participants included 155 Latinx-identified students in kindergarten through fifth grade, 155 parents and 110 teachers spread across 34 schools in Nebraska, Colorado and Missouri.

During the study, teachers were assigned to either the TAPP intervention group or a comparison group. Teachers in the TAPP group met with parents and TAPP consultants to identify and prioritize students' strengths, set goals, develop strategies, implement a joint home-school plan, and evaluate and monitor student progress.

Students in the comparison group received typical services provided by schools.

Researchers found that while all participating students increased social and adaptive skills, and

reduced problem behaviors and attention/learning problems at school, TAPP participants' gains were significantly greater.

At home, only students whose parents received the TAPP intervention showed increases in social and adaptive skills, and decreases in externalizing and internalizing behaviors.

Parents and teachers reported both long- and short-term benefits from TAPP participation, including enhanced relationships, increased perspective-taking and improved use of home/school strategies.

Latinx students remain the fastest growing ethnic group, comprising about one-quarter of U.S. students. According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Latinx students are projected to represent one-third of America's school-age population by 2050, equaling non-Latinx white students.

“We tend to impose things in education that work for white, middle-class Americans without thinking about how it fits for people from other cultures who care just as deeply about their children and their future,” Sheridan said. “If we really want what's best for kids, who learn across many settings with lots of different people, we have to examine all the ways to support them. If we center families, partnerships and relationships, that could that be a powerful source for addressing the inequities we see among marginalized students.”

The project is funded by a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences. Along with Sheridan, the research team includes co-investigators Lorey Wheeler, CYFS research associate professor, and Brandy Clarke, associate professor of psychology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute; Marianne Andersen, research coordination specialist; Daniela Cubas, data collector; Kristen Derr, project manager; and graduate research assistants Libby Brower, Kara Brown, Donna Chen and Sunhyoung Lee.

'HOMEGROWN' TRAINING APPROACH ADDRESSES NEED FOR RURAL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, schools are primary providers of mental health services for children.

But for small towns scattered throughout Nebraska, mental health professionals are hard to come by. Recruiting and retaining such professionals is crucial to ensuring these rural populations have access to quality mental health care.

Because mental health trainees are more likely to remain and work in the rural communities where they live, Beth Doll, professor of educational psychology, and Matthew Gormley, associate professor of educational psychology, are leading a



From left: Beth Doll, principal investigator, and Matthew Gormley, co-principal investigator.

virtual training program that can be accessible to anyone interested in a career in school psychology, no matter where they reside.

The Prairie Nebraska project is addressing the state's shortage of mental health professionals by training rural Nebraska residents using a "grow-your-own" program leading to state certification in school psychology.

Participants currently work as educators in rural schools and are securing additional training to transition into school psychology.

"The best way to find someone to train for a rural position is to find someone who wants to stay in the rural districts," Doll said. "Otherwise, small towns can end up being springboards to opportunities in Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island or in other states."

Prairie Nebraska will pay trainees' tuition and fees, and will provide a small stipend for books. The grant also ensures trainees have access to all program resources.

The training program spreads the two-year School Psychology program across three years to accommodate working participants.

After finishing their required coursework, trainees will complete an internship as a school psychologist in school districts and education service units across the state.

Participants will then have earned an Educational Specialist degree in school psychology, and will qualify for a Nebraska Department of Education school psychology certificate. Graduates will be prepared to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams with school-, community- and clinic-based mental health professionals.

"We're providing an avenue to a school psychologist career for people who want to remain in their community," Gormley said. "A model like this holds a lot of promise and could be replicated to serve other communities anywhere."

Doll has experience with this type of innovative training program. When she was a graduate student at the University of Kentucky in the 1980s, she worked with about a dozen rural, eastern Kentucky residents in a similar training program. With no internet at the time, participants met two Saturdays a month, then completed internships in nearby rural communities.

"I was back in Kentucky 15 years ago doing a workshop, and the students from that first program were still living in rural Kentucky working as school psychologists," Doll said.

She saw similar success in a program she spearheaded in Colorado.

"This type of training creates a far more stable cohort of practitioners who want to stick around," Doll said.

Once the program's sustainability is determined, expanding throughout Nebraska — and to surrounding states and beyond — is a possibility.

"Part of what's unique about rural Nebraska is how spread-out the communities are," Doll said. "We want the Nebraska Department of Education to realize that this program may be an effective mechanism that could be adopted for the entire state."

The project is funded by a grant from the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska within the University of Nebraska Medical Center.



We're providing an avenue to a school psychologist career for people who want to remain in their community.



2022-2023 LAYMAN AWARDS

Funded by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Office of Research and Economic Development, Layman Awards provide funding for projects that will enhance the recipient’s ability to obtain external funding to support prominent scholarly work.

Three Layman Awards were awarded to CYFS research affiliates in 2023.



MICHAEL BURTON

Assistant Professor, Art & Design

“Animating History: Using Film as an Educational Tool to Tell Personal Stories of Enslaved Families Who Sought Freedom through the Law”

Nebraska researchers are working with teachers to share stories from the past and connect them to the larger historical narrative of America through animation and film.

Researchers will work with 12th-grade teachers at Lincoln Public Schools and Episcopal High School in Virginia to create an open-education resource for students who want to create history-based films.

Students will use the “Animating History” framework to understand historical topics and create films of their own using the latest history scholarship. They will conduct research on a specific topic and consult with historians as they develop their film ideas.

This project’s team features expertise in history, film studies and animation. Research will combine modes of interdisciplinary thinking to advance knowledge in areas no single discipline can achieve on its own.

Burton and co-PIs Kwakiutl Dreher, assistant professor of English, and William Thomas, professor of history, have collaborated to create three films in an open-educational resource (OER) using their films and interdisciplinary approach to contextualize narrative topics on race and history.

Researchers will transfer their current website and build a new OER framework to be housed in the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities in the University of Nebraska Libraries. The team’s long-term goal is national distribution, education and engagement.



KATELYN COBURN

Assistant Professor, Child, Youth & Family Studies

“Pilot Test of a Nervous System Informed Intervention to Increase Embodied Affirmation of Nonbinary People”

Research suggests nonbinary youth and adults experience bias and discrimination more frequently than cisgender and binary transgender people, contributing to negative mental health outcomes.

One study revealed that 71% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported having experienced discrimination, and 46% of transgender and nonbinary adults reported being verbally harassed because of their gender identity.

Bias and discrimination toward nonbinary people are often tied to beliefs about the “normality” of cisgender identities, and that is a necessity for individuals to have a binary gender identity (e.g., to be either man or woman). Existing research suggests that such opinions are often rooted in religious beliefs and a lack of education about gender identity.

This study is designed to help reduce health disparities that result from bias and discrimination faced by nonbinary people in all contexts, including experiences rooted in marginalizing Christian religious discourse. Researchers will pilot the Embodied Nonbinary Affirmation (ENA) workshop, an education-based, group experiential learning intervention rooted in understanding the autonomic nervous system’s role in contributing to both bias and affirmation.

The ENA intervention is designed to enhance Christian religious leaders’ affirmation of nonbinary people through nervous system-informed regulation and embodiment practices that increase inclusive attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward nonbinary people. Gathered data from this pilot project will be used for the efficacy and acceptability of the ENA workshop, which will inform future large-scale implementation studies of the ENA intervention.



CIARA OUSLEY

Assistant Professor, Special Education & Communication Disorders

“The Effects of Embedding Augmentative and Alternative Communication within Storybook Reading and Play Time for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder”

Roughly 6.87 million children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and have not developed functional vocal speech. These children cannot communicate with their voice and may require augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), such as speech-generating devices, to support, supplement or replace vocal speech.

Early interventions that incorporate AAC embedded within natural contexts — such as play time, for example — and target social communication skills may lead to increases in language, social skills and play skills.

However, introducing AAC systems within social communication interventions can lead to increases in cognitive demands on the child (i.e., child focusing on three items: the AAC system, communication partner and activity), and heightened challenges on the communication partner (i.e., communication partner focusing on the evidence-based strategies, AAC system and activity).

Limited data exists on how AAC can be incorporated within storybook reading and play time interactions with young children with autism. This project aims to evaluate the effects of embedding AAC within storybook reading and play time with children, ages 2-5, with ASD who have limited to no vocal speech using a series of single-case experimental designs.

Researchers will conduct these experiments with assistance from student workers and will collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the intervention and supports are ecologically valid. Funding this project will lead to tailoring the intervention to be more feasible, accessible and effective for parents and caregivers of children with ASD.

LANDSCAPE OF SUPPORT

SNAPSHOT OF CUMULATIVE CYFS GRANT ACTIVITY

The graphic below highlights the total dollar amount of internal and external grants supported by CYFS since its inception in 2004.

Internal grants funded

\$4,978,501

External grants funded

\$128,225,285



RESEARCH IMPACT

The figures below are indicators of cumulative research impact for CYFS.

957 Total grants submitted

356 Total grants funded

39% Grant submission success rate (based on known decisions)

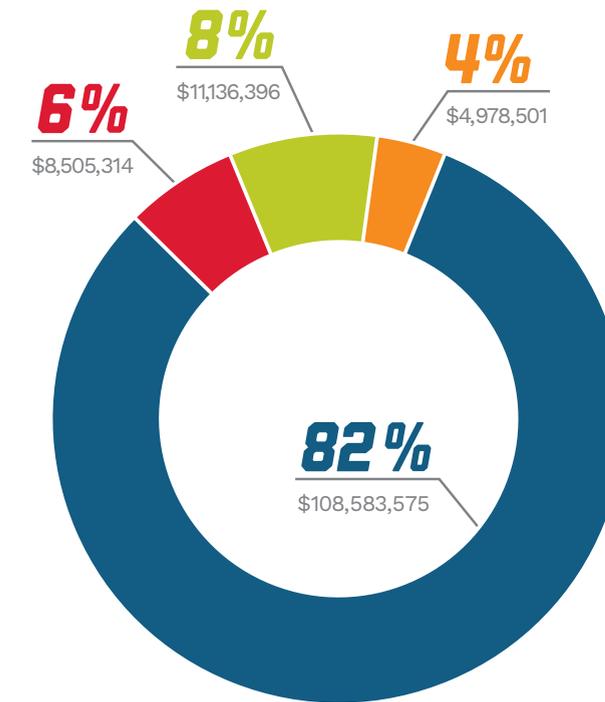
\$25.65

Return rate to the University of Nebraska—Lincoln for every \$1 invested

SOURCES OF FUNDING

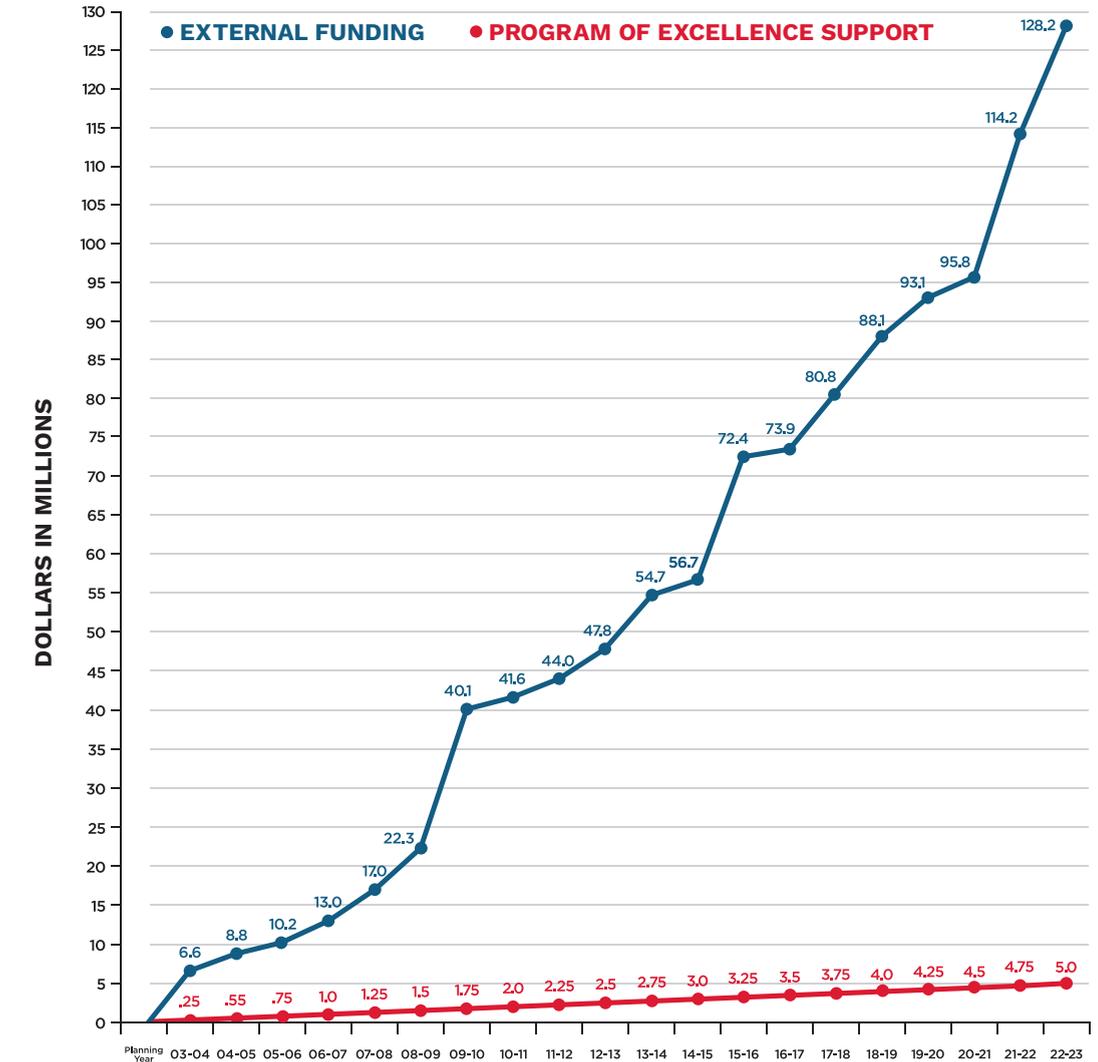
The chart below shows the total dollar amount of grants supported by CYFS since its inception in 2004, and the proportion of funding through federal, state, foundation and internal (i.e., University of Nebraska) sources.

- Federal (152 grants)
 - State (41 grants)
 - Foundation (86 grants)
 - Internal (77 grants)
- Percentages rounded to nearest 1%



CUMULATIVE EXTERNAL GRANT DOLLARS & PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE SUPPORT

The line graph below depicts the total dollar amount of external funding (i.e., federal, state and foundation) supported by CYFS, relative to Program of Excellence funding support from the University of Nebraska.



ACTIVE GRANTS & CONTRACTS

The following grants and contracts received new or ongoing funding during the 2022-23 fiscal year. Principal Investigators (PIs), including those identified as co-PIs for each project, are listed below.

Federal Awards

Administration for Children & Families

Can Family Home Child Care Providers' Preparation and Serving Practices Influence Children's Vegetable Consumption?

PIs: Saima Hasnin, Dipti Dev

Child Care Provider Handbook Redesign (subaward through Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services)

PI: Holly Hatton-Bowers

Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)

PIs: Holly Hatton-Bowers, Carrie Clark, Lisa Knoche

Early Care and Education Policy, System and Environment Approaches for Improving Children's Health Behaviors: The Nebraska NAP SACC program (subaward through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services)

PIs: Donnia Behrends, Dipti Dev

Early Head Start University Partnership (subaward through ICF International)

PI: Lisa Knoche

Getting Ready 0-3 (GR03): Supporting the Development of Infants/Toddlers Through an Integrated Parent-Teacher Relationship-Based Approach

PIs: Lisa Knoche, Susan Sheridan

Getting Ready Preschool Development Grant (PDG) (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)

PI: Lisa Knoche

Go NAP SACC Online Tool and Evaluation (subaward through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services)

PI: Dipti Dev

Help Me Grow Centralized Access Point Evaluation (subaward through Children's Hospital & Medical Center)

PI: Lorey Wheeler

HSSCO Needs Assessment (subaward through Nebraska Department of Education)

PI: Holly Hatton-Bowers

Mealtime Emotional Climate and Feeding Practices: An Avenue to Improve Children's Dietary Intake in the Early Care and Education Settings

PIs: Jasmin Smith, Dipti Dev

Mindfulness in Early Care and Education (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)

PI: Holly Hatton-Bowers

Phase 2 PDG Database (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation- Buffett Early Childhood Institute)

PI: Lisa Knoche

Centers for Disease Control

The Impact of an Adapted Version of the Strengthening Families Program on Reducing IPV Among Caregivers and ACEs Among Their Children

PI: Katie Edwards

Rigorous Evaluation of the READY to Stand Curriculum as a Tool to Prevent the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Among Racially and Ethnically Diverse Urban Youth

PI: Katie Edwards

National Institutes of Health

An Innovative, Prospective Model to Understand Risk and Protective Factors for Sexual Assault Experiences and Outcomes Among Sexual Minority Men

PI: Katie Edwards

Development and Pilot Evaluation of an Online Intervention to Prevent Dating Violence and Problem Drinking in Sexual Minority Youth

PI: Katie Edwards

Evaluating Psychophysiological Mechanisms of Early Childhood Teachers' Stress Resilience and Their Relevance for Preschoolers' Self-Regulation

PIs: Carrie Clark, Holly Hatton-Bowers

Evaluation of the Efficacy of a Physical Therapy Intervention Targeting Sitting and Reaching for Young Children with Cerebral Palsy (subaward through University of Southern California)

PI: Natalie Koziol

Neural Predictors of Speech Perception Outcomes in Adults with Cochlear Implants

PIs: Yingying Wang, Michelle Hughes

Setting Capacity and Performance in Typically Developing Infants and Infants With Motor Delay (subaward through University of Southern California)

PI: Natalie Koziol

National Science Foundation

All in a Day's Work: The Effects of Daily School Experiences on Children's Executive Function Skills (subaward through American Educational Research Association)

PI: Jenna Finch

FIRST: The Math at Home Program: Promoting Parent-Child Math Engagement to Improve Young Children's Math Skills (awarded by Nebraska EPSCoR program)

PI: Amy Napoli

Nebraska STEM: Supporting Elementary Rural Teacher Leadership

PIs: Amanda Thomas, Guy Trainin, Wendy Smith

Research on Integrated STEM Efficacy (RISE): A Study of Elementary Preservice Teachers and Noyce Scholars

PI: Deepika Menon

The Role of Stigma in Partner Violence

PI: Katie Edwards

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Read for Resilience: Supporting Children After Disasters With Storybooks (subaward through Extension Disaster Education Network)

PIs: Amy Napoli, Holly Hatton-Bowers

SBIR: STEM Lesson Creation Coaching Framework to Improve the Pedagogy of K-5 Teachers Implementing the NGSS (subaward through StarrMatica)

PI: Natalie Koziol

Youth Civic Engagement Using Simulations and Design Thinking

PIs: Maria Rosario de Guzman, Surin Kim

U.S. Department of Education

A Missing Link to a Better Tomorrow: Developing Health Literacy in Transition-age Youth With High Incidence Disabilities

PIs: Alexandra Torkelson-Trout, Kristin Duppong Hurley

Art TEAMS: Nurturing Educators Who Integrate Art, Core Subjects and Culturally Responsive Teaching to Support Students in Becoming Makers of Change

PIs: Guy Trainin, Kimberley D'Adamo, HyeonJin Yoon

Coaching in Early Intervention (CEI): Promoting Outcomes for Infants/Toddlers with Disabilities Through Evidence-Based Practices

PIs: Lisa Knoche, Rachel Schachter, Susan Sheridan, Gwen Nugent

Early Learning Network Lead

PIs: Susan Sheridan, Lisa Knoche

Efficacy of Virtual Professional Development in Rural Schools to Enhance Teacher-Parent Partnerships for Students with Behavioral Challenges

PIs: Susan Sheridan, Amanda Witte, Lorey Wheeler

Exploring Cognitive and Foundational Processes Underlying Pre-algebra Among Students With and Without Mathematics Learning Difficulties

PIs: Min Namkung, Wendy Smith

Interdisciplinary Training for Early Intervention and Visual Impairment (IT-EIVI)

PI: Mackenzie Savaiano

Language Gains During Early Childhood: Prediction of Later Outcomes and Multiple-Methods Exploration of Relevant Classroom Factors (subaward through The Ohio State University)

PI: Rachel Schachter

Learning Frontiers: Pre-K to Grade 3

PIs: Susan Sheridan, Lisa Knoche

Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support Implementation Support Team (subaward through Nebraska Department of Education)

PI: Amanda Witte

Nebraska SPDG (subaward through Nebraska Department of Education)

PI: Amanda Witte

Project VIEW: Visual Impairments Education in Writing (subaward through University of California-Irvine)

PI: Mackenzie Savaiano

Retaining Special Education Teachers in Nebraska: A Comprehensive Retention Program (NCRP) (subaward through Nebraska Department of Education)

PIs: Amanda Witte, HyeonJin Yoon

School Characteristics, Classroom Processes, and PK-1 Learning and Development (subaward through the University of Florida)

PIs: Amanda Witte, Natalie Koziol

School Psychology Specialization in Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

PI: Scott Napolitano

Systematic Efficacy Replication Study of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation in Elementary Schools (subaward through the University of Wisconsin-Madison)

PIs: Susan Sheridan, Amanda Witte

Testing the Efficacy of Embedded Social Skills Within a Universal Classroom Management Program: Well-Managed Schools (subaward through Iowa State University)

PI: W. Alex Mason

Testing the Efficacy of INSIGHTS for Promoting Positive Learning Environments and Academic Achievement in Nebraska: A Replication Study

PIs: Gwen Nugent, Susan Sheridan, James Bovaird

WORDS (Workshops on Reading Development Strategies) for Pandemic Recovery in Nebraska (subaward through University of California-Irvine)

PI: Natalie Koziol

U.S. Department of Justice

Healing Among Rural and Indigenous Women Victims of Domestic Violence: A Mixed-Methodological Analysis (subaward through the University of South Dakota)

PI: Katie Edwards

Identifying the Feasibility and Acceptability of Conducting Longitudinal Outcome Evaluation Research With Adult Survivors of Sex Trafficking and Their Perceptions of a Comprehensive Service Model

PI: Katie Edwards

Indigenous-led Research on Sex Trafficking Among Native Americans in the Northern Great Plains

PI: Katie Edwards

Indigenous-led Research on Sex Trafficking Among Native Americans in Western South Dakota (subaward through the University of South Dakota)

PI: Katie Edwards

U.S. Treasury

ARPA Getting Ready (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)

PI: Lisa Knoche

CHIME for Teachers and Families (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)

PI: Holly Hatton-Bowers

Prairie Nebraska (subaward through University of Nebraska Medical Center)

PIs: Beth Doll, Matthew Gormley

Foundation/Other Awards

A Foundational Study of Adaptive Behaviors in Individuals with Down Syndrome

Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant

PI: Susan Loveall

Attachment Security and the Gut-Brain Axis: A Nationwide Sample

Funding Source: UNL ORED Biomedical Research Seed Grant

PI: Patty Kuo

Building Research Collaborations: Exploring Equity as Rationale for the State-driven Accountability in Nebraska

Funding Source: NU Collaboration Initiative

PIs: Taeyeon Kim, Ted Hamann

Can Family Child Care Home Providers Influence Children's Vegetable Consumption?

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Institute

PIs: Saima Hasnin, Dipti Dev

EAT for Prevention

Funding Source: UNL ORED Revision Awards

PI: Dipti Dev

Educare Evaluation 2022-2023

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund

PI: Dawn Davis

Efficacy of an Online Evidence-Based Sexual Assault Resistance Intervention for Undergraduate Women

Funding Source: Canadian Institute for Health Research (subaward through University of Windsor at Canada)

PI: Katie Edwards

Establishment and Evaluation of an Indigenous-led Center to Prevent Sexual Violence Among Indigenous Youth Across the U.S.

Funding Source: UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition/Catalyst Grant Award

PI: Katie Edwards

Exploring Principal Leadership's Longitudinal Impacts on High School Students' Racial Gaps in Mathematics: Evidence from National HSL09 Data

Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant

PI: Jiangang Xia

Exploring the Impact of Emotional Availability on the Efficacy of Physical Therapy Intervention

Funding Source: Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (subaward through Virginia Commonwealth University)

PI: Natalie Koziol

Formative Research to Inform the Development of an Initiative to Prevent Violence Against Native American Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Two-Spirit Youth

Funding Source: UNL Layman Award

PI: Katie Edwards

Helping Youth Thrive Model of Positive Youth Development

Funding Source: National 4-H Council

PI: Seth Teager

Help Me Grow: A Novel System Approach to Support Health Equity for Underserved Families of Young Children

Funding Source: NU Collaboration Initiative

PI: Lorey Wheeler

Mathematical Spiritual Wisdom Within Young People

Funding Source: UNL Layman Award

PI: Ricardo Martinez

Measuring Gross Motor Function Change in 3- to 24-Month-Old Children With or at High Risk for CP: Validation of the Gross Motor Function Measure-66 Item Sets

Funding Source: American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine

PI: Natalie Koziol

Mindfulness and Mastery

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund (subaward through UNMC)

PI: Dawn Davis

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation Video Production

Funding Source: Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

PI: Seth Teager

Nebraska Community Action Research for Equity and Sustainability (NE CARES) Hub

Funding Source: UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition/Planning Grant Award

PI: Sarah Zuckerman, Virginia Chaidez, Megan Kelley, Trey Andrews

Participatory Humanitarianism: Linking Mental Health Data to Action With Older Refugees and Refugees With Disabilities as Co-Researchers

Funding Source: ELRHA Humanitarian Innovation Fund (subaward through Amref International University)

PI: Julie Tippens

Promoting Positive School Climate Among Newcomer Immigrant Adolescents

Funding Source: Spencer Foundation (subaward through Columbia University)

PI: Lorey Wheeler

Promoting Women's Sexual Wellness Using Comprehensive, Rights-Based Adult Sexuality Education

Funding Source: UNL Layman Award

PI: Dena Abbott

Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers (RESPECT) Across Nebraska

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund

PIs: Julia Torquati, Lisa Knoche

RISE With Insects (Resilience Ignited through Science and Ethics)

Funding Source: UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition/Planning Grant Award

PIs: Ana Maria Velez Arango, Holly Hatton-Bowers, Louise Lynch-O'Brien, Maria Elena Oliveri, Susan Weller, Sandra Williams

Student Perspectives on Effectively Implementing Community College Food Aid Resources

Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant

PI: Crystal Garcia

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Institute

PI: Lisa Knoche

The Development and Psychometric Testing of the Mealtime Emotional Climate in Childcare Observational Scales (MECCOS)

Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Institute

PIs: Jasmin Smith, Dipti Dev

Toward P300-Based Brain-Computer Interface Access for Those With Severe Physical Impairments

Funding Source: UNL Layman Award

PI: Kevin Pitt

Unbelief Within Marginalized Communities

Funding Source: John Templeton Foundation (subaward through Queen's University Belfast)

PI: Dena Abbott

Understanding Equity in NE School Accountability: An Exploration of School Leaders' Narratives

Funding Source: UNL Layman Award

PI: Taeyeon Kim

Understanding the Experience of Bullying Among Students With Disabilities: A Phenomenological Study

Funding Source: Society for the Study of School Psychology

PIs: Miriam Crinion, Susan Swearer

Veggie Meter

Funding Source: Agricultural Research Division

PI: Dipti Dev

AFFILIATES & PERSONNEL

CYFS Research Affiliates

Research affiliates make up a network of 100 diverse faculty from across the University of Nebraska system who make significant contributions to Nebraska's interdisciplinary research community in the social, behavioral and educational sciences. Research affiliates are actively engaged with CYFS and are integral to our mission. Through their formal connection to the center, they also have opportunities to engage in valuable research exchanges, professional development, technical assistance and networking events, along with communications support to make their CYFS-housed work highly visible and accessible.

Explore the **CYFS Research Network**: cyfs.unl.edu/research-network

University of Nebraska Medical Center

Munroe-Meyer Institute

Nursing

Therese Mathews

Psychology

Brandy Clarke

College of Public Health

Department of Health Promotion & Behavior

Abbie Raikes

Office of Academic Affairs

Interprofessional Academy of Educators

Michelle Howell Smith

University of Nebraska—Lincoln

College of Education & Human Sciences

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Nebraska Center for Research on CYFS

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Natalie Koziol
Gwen Nugent
Lorey Wheeler
Amanda Witte
HyeonJin Yoon

Educational Administration

Elvira Abrica

Crystal Garcia
Deryl Hatch-Tocaimaza
Taeyeon Kim
Nicholas Pace
Scott Sturgeon
Jiangang Xia
Sarah Zuckerman

Educational Psychology

Dena Abbott
James Bovaird
Eric Buhs
Carrie Clark
Edward Daly III
Katie Edwards
Matthew Gormley
Neeta Kantamneni
Kenneth Kiewra
Scott Napolitano
Michael Scheel
Susan Sheridan
Susan Swearer

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Kelley Buchheister
Katelyn Coburn
Rochelle Dalla
Dawn Davis
Dipti Dev
Holly Hatton-Bowers
Cody Hollist
Soo-Young Hong
Patty Kuo
W. Alex Mason
Amy Napoli
Gilbert Parra
Rachel Schachter
Julie Tippens
Julia Torquati
Yan Xia

Nutrition & Health Sciences

Lisa Franzen-Castle
Georgia Jones
Megan Kelley
Yongjun Wang
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Cynthia Cress
Michelle Hughes
Susan Loveall
Min Namkung
Ciara Ousley
Kevin Pitt
Amanda Rodriguez
Mackenzie Savaiano
Yingying Wang
Kristy Weissling

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Theresa Catalano
Lauren Gatti
Lydia Kiramba
Lorraine Males
Lawrence Scharmann
Amanda Thomas
Guy Trainin

Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design

Michael Burton
Mary Alice Casto

College of Arts & Sciences

Biological Sciences

Brian Couch

Communication Studies

Jody Koenig Kellas
Angela Palmer-Wackerly

Computer Science & Engineering

Marilyn C. Wolf

Psychology

Lisa Crockett
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Jenna Finch
David Hansen
Timothy Nelson
Anne Schutte

Sociology

Kimberly Tyler

College of Business Administration

Bureau of Business Research

Mitch Herian

Economics

Daniel Tannenbaum

College of Engineering

Durham School of Architectural Engineering & Construction

Lily Wang

College of Journalism & Mass Communications

Advertising & Public Relations

Changmin Yan

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Nebraska Extension

Bradley Barker
Kathleen Lodl

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