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

2023-24 Annual Report

College of Education & Human Sciences

CYFS

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF IMPACT 2004 2024

Message from the Director

CYFS at 20: Research that Shapes the Future

Twenty years and counting!

Since its founding in 2004, the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools has steadily expanded its size, scope and reach, becoming a nationally renowned hub for interdisciplinary research collaboration.

Our diverse partners in practice, policy and research have fueled the center's growth and kept us focused on what truly matters. Together, we are taking on the ever-present social, behavioral and educational challenges facing Nebraska, the nation and our world.

While society is always changing, many challenges from 20 years ago persist, particularly among marginalized and underserved populations. Society continues to grapple with poverty, workforce shortages, and limited access to high-quality education, child care, health care and mental health services.

As always, CYFS is dedicated to addressing these challenges by thinking big and turning ideas into action. The center is a place where research begins, grows and impacts lives — from infancy through adulthood. And collaboration with researchers, practitioners and policymakers is more important than ever to ensure our work is relevant to the children, youth, families, schools, agencies and communities we aim to support.

In this anniversary year, we are proud to showcase CYFS' life-changing research, including key impacts and milestones, and significant programs of work with a proven track record of improving outcomes for participants. Stories highlight research on special education teacher shortages, reading support for young students, parent-teacher relationships, diversity and inclusion, cutting-edge technologies that improve quality of life and more.

Importantly, the solutions derived from our research are guided by real-world, field-based needs, and align with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's strategic initiatives (see next page) and CEHS grand visions, which focus on thriving young children, comprehensive health and well-being, and strong communities.

As we celebrate 20 years of making a positive difference in people's lives through research, we want to thank the many colleagues and partners who have contributed to our mission. With deep gratitude, we are excited to explore what comes next. The center's talented faculty, staff, students and nearly 100 research affiliates are committed to making our work accessible and sustainable within communities and reaching decision-makers who can drive meaningful policy and systems-level change.

This exciting milestone brings new focus and energy to our vision that all children, youth, families and schools have the opportunity to realize their potential and reach beyond. By continuing to work together, I am confident we can achieve even greater advancements in research that will shape the future over the next 20 years and beyond.

Susan M. Sheridan

Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Founding Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools
George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology

Explore Our Anniversary Website!

cyfs.unl.edu/2024

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

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 largely through external grants and contracts.

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

- **Academic Intervention & Learning**
- **Early Childhood Education & Development**
- **Social, Emotional & Behavioral Well-being**
- **Biological Bases of Learning & Behavior**
- **Rural Schools & Communities**
- **Research, Measurement & Evaluation Methods**

OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES THROUGH RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES.

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

Learn more about the 2024-25 Catalyst planning grant recently awarded to CYFS researchers on page 34.

Contents

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

Back row (from left): Mary Jo McElhose, Sarah Zuckerman, HyeonJin Yoon and Rachel Schachter. Front row (from left): Janet Bohaty, Amanda Witte, Natalie Koziol and Nancy Coffey.

WORDS project targets post-pandemic reading success, educator growth

A student's ability to read is a critical predictor of academic and lifelong success. In Nebraska, the COVID-19 pandemic hit students with reading difficulties especially hard, particularly students attending rural schools.

A team of Nebraska researchers is working to boost reading outcomes for rural students in kindergarten through third grade by providing professional learning opportunities to teachers across the state, speeding up pandemic recovery for students with reading difficulties, as well as those at risk.

The Nebraska WORDS project — Workshops on Reading Development Strategies — has been a valuable resource for teachers by promoting effective, research-based strategies to deliver high-quality reading instruction and assessment that aligns with state law.

The project, led by University of Nebraska–Lincoln researchers in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education, launched just prior to the 2020 pandemic in response to the urgent need expressed by many districts and schools for training to comply with the 2018 Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.

Following the pandemic, with even greater support needed by educators to help students stay on track, WORDS researchers secured additional funding to focus efforts on partnering with state educators in rural schools and districts to reduce student reading delays.

WORDS provides post-pandemic professional learning and workforce development for schools by targeting teachers' instructional practices across four areas that align with the NebraskaREADS initiative: teacher professional development, assessment training and support for schools, reading leadership training and after-school reading tutoring for students.

WORDS for Pandemic Recovery in Nebraska supports all K-3 teachers and students in 25 participating rural schools, with additional supports provided for students falling below state-identified benchmarks.

> ***"I feel strongly that all kids can learn to read. This project is about teachers helping teachers become better teachers; we want teachers to have the tools they need to help kids learn how to read."***

Researchers evaluate the impacts by comparing schools that receive WORDS with schools not receiving WORDS, and examine outcomes for students with cognitive or intellectual disabilities.

Researchers evaluate students in WORDS schools to determine whether those who score just below the reading threshold — and therefore receive additional support — have better reading outcomes than students who score just above the threshold and do not receive additional supports.

All K-3 students in participating schools — more than 2,500 children — have either received or are receiving WORDS.

Natalie Koziol, CYFS research associate professor, said that one year into the project, the number of students needing additional support is decreasing among students at participating schools, and teachers have reported changing their instructional practices.

After the first year, 78% of participating teachers reported that WORDS helped improve their ability to teach reading, and 83% said WORDS helped improve their students' overall reading achievement.

Teachers also reported that WORDS helped them engage in self-reflection about their reading instruction.

"The proportion of students needing additional support has decreased in schools that are addressing children's reading needs," Koziol said. "At the same time, more can be done. There are still many who would benefit from additional supports."

Janet Bohaty, senior research associate, special education and communication disorders, said WORDS is making a positive impact among young Nebraska students.

"I am very passionate about all children being able to read," she said. "I feel strongly that all kids can learn to read. This project is about teachers helping teachers become better teachers; we want teachers to have the tools they need to help kids learn how to read."

The project is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, through a subaward from the University of California, Irvine, and additional grants from the Nebraska Department of Education and the Swanson Biggs Adams Family Foundation. Along with Koziol and Bohaty, the project's UNL research team includes Pam Bazis, assistant professor of special education and communication disorders; Amanda Witte, CYFS research associate professor; HyeonJin Yoon, CYFS research assistant professor; Rachel Schachter, associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois Chicago; and Sarah Zuckerman, associate professor of educational administration.

WORDS helps teachers keep students on track with their reading progress.

Nebraska researchers extend TAPP intervention's reach to rural Appalachia

From left: HyeonJin Yoon, Susan Sheridan and Amanda Witte, principal investigator.

Students who struggle with social and behavioral issues are at high risk of developing long-term problems, both at school and in life.

When those students live in rural parts of the country, with limited access to behavioral health services, challenges can significantly increase.

Amanda Witte, CYFS research associate professor, is leading a five-year project to address rural children's social and behavioral needs using a process known as Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP). The study is designed to test the efficacy of TAPP delivered via distance technology (i.e., Tele-TAPP) in rural Appalachian elementary schools.

TAPP is a problem-solving and decision-making intervention developed by CYFS Director Susan Sheridan and other Nebraska researchers. It builds on student strengths and fosters collaboration among parents and teachers to enhance students' academic, behavioral and social outcomes.

Researchers aim to recruit 186 students — kindergarten through sixth grade — with disruptive behaviors. The first cohort of students were from schools in Tennessee and southwestern Virginia, and future cohorts may spread to other states in the region. Participating schools are randomly assigned to either the intervention condition or the typical classroom "business as usual" model.

"I am excited to work in these communities, where parents and teachers are eager for the opportunity to bolster family-school partnerships," Witte said.

A university-based TAPP consultant delivers the intervention virtually to parents and teachers, and maintains communication throughout the process with emails and text messages.

Researchers assess student social-behavioral outcomes at home and school. Teachers submit standardized measures about the participating students, and parents report on their child's behavior at home.

Data are gathered not only on students' disruptive behavior, but also on social skills and academic skills — whether they can stay on task and complete their work, for example.

The first student cohort received the 12-week intervention in spring 2024. The following four cohorts will span full academic years, beginning in fall 2024. To evaluate the program's effectiveness, researchers will compare outcomes among students who participate in TAPP with those who do not.

Parent-teacher relationships will also be assessed through surveys.

The project is an extension of a 2020 pilot project funded by an Office of Research and Innovation Layman Award, which included students and their parents and teachers in rural Appalachia.

Witte's research from the pilot found remote-delivered TAPP reduced rural children's off-task behaviors at school, and that disruptive behavior at home decreased. There were also improvements in parent-teacher relationships and home-school partnerships, and participating parents and teachers rated their TAPP experience via distance technology as high or higher than some of the intervention's in-person studies.

"This is another method of making TAPP available," Witte said. "This will give some flexibility to access TAPP in rural communities that don't have many educational specialists. Because we've done this type of study before, many of the logistical details will be easier. We'll be able to focus more on local community context and long-term partnerships."

This project is funded by a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences. Along with Witte and Sheridan, the research team includes HyeonJin Yoon, CYFS research assistant professor. They are collaborating with researchers from East Tennessee State University, including Pam Mims, professor of special education and associate dean of research and grants; and Kim Hale, associate professor of educational foundations and special education.

Jenna Finch, principal investigator

Research explores how classroom time affects children's self-regulation skills

In recent years, illnesses, quarantines and school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic have generated increased emphasis on the importance of instructional time for children's academic achievement following absences from the classroom.

There is also evidence that pandemic school closures disproportionately affected U.S. schools that had students with lower third-grade standardized test scores and higher numbers of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

While research suggests that the number of days in school is associated with gains in children's reading and math skills, little is known about how instructional time affects children's non-academic skills critical for school success.

Jenna Finch, assistant professor of psychology, is exploring the effects of time in school on students' executive function — mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking and self-control, which enable children to self-regulate their attention and behaviors.

Finch is examining data collected from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten cohort of 2010-11 — approximately 18,000 children who were in kindergarten in fall 2010 — to assess the effects of instructional time on executive function skills across kindergarten, first and second grade.

She aims to better understand whether children who are absent from school may need additional support for their self-regulation skills, and what those supports should be.

"There is clear evidence that instructional time predicts gains in children's reading and math skills," Finch said. "But we're unsure how instructional time affects children's non-academic skills, which are critical for school success."

In early childhood, executive functioning enables children to plan and meet goals, follow directions and stay focused despite distractions — all vital skills for life learning.

"Executive function skills are essential to learning in classroom," she said. "Throughout the school day, there are all sorts of activities that require kids to engage their executive function skills; these activities give them practice. But we must better understand what the school's role is, and who would benefit the most from adding instruction time."

Once data are analyzed, Finch and her team offer specific recommendations for supporting children's self-regulation in the classroom.

"These skills are so predictive of long-term achievement and educational outcomes, as well as health and income, and adult well-being," Finch said. "Self-regulation skills help people be successful in life."

This project is funded by a grant from the American Educational Research Association.

Researchers build science confidence, capacity among rural early childhood educators

Research shows children starting kindergarten often know less about science compared to reading and math. This may be because science activities typically make up the smallest proportion of the preschool day.

The science opportunity gap is even more pronounced in rural communities, where limited educational resources and lower emphasis on science education widen the divide.

Soo-Young Hong, associate professor of child, youth and family studies, is leading a three-year project focused on strengthening rural early childhood educators' competence and confidence in teaching science and engineering concepts with young children.

Hong and her team are developing and testing a practice-based professional development model for early childhood science education in center- and home-based early care and education settings serving children ages 3-5 in rural Nebraska.

The educators will gain skills in using reflective practice — the ability to reflect on one's actions to continuously learn — and adapting lessons in ways that are authentic and relevant to children's everyday life. This approach will support them in creating and experimenting with new ideas and approaches to broaden and enrich students' learning experiences.

The project is designed to build educators' science knowledge, while boosting their confidence in guiding young children to think like scientists.

"Early childhood educators know children love to ask questions and have all kinds of interests and curiosity about what they see and experience," Hong said. "Educators want to support that learning, but they sometimes don't believe they have the capacity to do that."

Because rural early childhood educators often express a lack of adequate training in teaching science concepts and practices, she said, they sometimes do not feel prepared to teach science-related lessons.

"These educators need a sustainable early childhood science professional-development model that provides access to resources and a community of practitioners," Hong said.

Researchers will create a professional development model tailored for rural Nebraska, then test it among 20 rural educators across the state.

A website will be created to allow communication among researchers and educators. For example, participants will be able to share journal entries and reflection notes with each other, as well as the project team. Educators will also be able to share their reflections and observations with families directly from the website.

Educators will use electronic reflective practice notebooks and will be encouraged to collaboratively explore and learn science content, closely observe children's interaction with materials and their own teaching practices, and reflect on their observations.

The study is based on results from the pilot PreSTAR project — Preschool Science Talk in Action and Reflection — which uses strategies that encourage teachers to reflect deeply on their own science teaching practices and what they notice about children's interactions with science-related materials in the classroom.

Top row, from left: Marianna Burks, Maddie Pieper, HyeonJin Yoon, Soo-Young Hong, LaDonna Werth and Doug Golick. Bottom row, from left: Lisa Poppe, Sarah Paulos, Deepika Menon and Christine Wittich.

Participants from the PreSTAR pilot project engage in a science lesson.

Hong said it is critical to expose children to high-quality science learning experiences and opportunities in early care and education settings, and that early childhood educators have the knowledge, tools, and self-efficacy to explore science with children in everyday activities and conversations.

Science learning activities help children develop problem-solving skills and understand the world around them. Such activities also support language and literacy skills by providing opportunities to learn and apply new words and concepts, share observations, compare different organisms or phenomena to note similarities and differences, write about and draw science ideas in journals, and listen to and talk about science-themed books.

Additionally, Hong said, science-related conversations help children develop reasoning skills and gain insight into their own thought processes — important steps for lifelong learning.

The project is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Along with Hong, other research team members include Marianna Burks, Doug Golick, Deepika Menon, Sarah Paulos, Maddie Pieper, Lisa Poppe, LaDonna Werth, Christine Wittich and HyeonJin Yoon.

> ***"Early childhood educators know children love to ask questions and have all kinds of interests and curiosity about what they see and experience. Educators want to support that learning, but they sometimes don't believe they have the capacity to do that."***

Brain-connected technology opens doors for children with speech, physical challenges

Kevin Pitt, principal investigator

Imagine being locked inside your own body, isolated and struggling to meaningfully connect and communicate with those around you.

Now imagine trying to cope with such isolation as a child.

For children with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI), the lack of reliable communication methods has devastating impacts on their quality of life, well-being, medical care and social interactions.

As advanced computer technology becomes more routine in daily life, researchers and engineers are exploring new ways to link it with the human brain. This involves creating a direct connection between the brain and control of an external device.

Brain-computer interface, or BCI, is an emerging field of study that aims to enhance quality of life for people with SSPI, offering increased communication and personal autonomy.

Kevin Pitt, assistant professor of special education and communication disorders, is leading a three-year project that uses this cutting-edge technology to facilitate communication for children with SSPIs. The project holds great potential to support children who find spoken forms of communication unavailable or inefficient, and face challenges with computer access.

Pitt and his team are refining clinical evaluation tools and assessments to enable BCI technology, with the goal to make them more accessible to children. This includes evaluating preferences for engaging BCI design and integrating BCI with existing augmentative and alternative communications (AAC) displays used with pediatric patients, such as photographic picture boards.

Approximately 97 million individuals worldwide have disabilities that require AAC techniques for communication support. While adult-based BCI-AAC research has laid a crucial foundation, studies have primarily focused on providing literate adults access to spelling-based systems. Unfortunately, this has left children with minimal or emerging language and literacy skills marginalized and unable to communicate using BCI-AAC tools.

Using data from a 2022 pilot study of adults with SSPI — those living with spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and other severe impairments — Pitt has tailored this project to focus on children.

"Children have been underserved in the BCI world," he said. "This project will help us better understand how to translate findings from adults to children, and how to implement BCI-AAC devices in the clinical setting."

Pitt and his team are using the P300 BCI-AAC device — a communication tool that records brain activity through electrodes in a non-invasive EEG cap. The device reads electrical signals generated by the brain when the user identifies something as novel or different, enabling the user to select communication picture symbols via his or her brain activity.

Typically, to control the P300 BCI-AAC device, the user views letters or communication symbols on a display while they are highlighted for a short time. When the desired item is highlighted, the user's brain emits an electrical spike detected by the BCI. This enables words and sentences to be communicated.

For this study, participants view pictures instead of letters.

Participants include 40 typically developing children and 10 children with SSPI due to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy, ages 8-12. They use the BCI-AAC device in the Augmentative and Alternative Communication Translation Lab in the Barkley Memorial Center on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's East Campus.

Researchers are collecting data on users' speed and accuracy, and are measuring attention, memory, motor skills and motivation to use the system.

This project is funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health–National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

Study targets effects of substance misuse on hearing, balance

A few years ago, Michelle Hughes, an audiologist and professor of special education and communication disorders, came across a journal article about an individual who experienced a drug overdose and ended up with sudden hearing loss.

Then she found more articles featuring similar stories. She was fascinated.

Her interest led to conversations with a friend and colleague, Amanda Chiao, pediatric audiologist and professor of surgery in the Division of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, and a former assistant professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

"It seemed as though researchers in some fields knew about these connections, and those in other fields didn't," said Hughes, director of the UNL's Cochlear Implant Research Lab. "We knew there was a ripe opportunity for research to fill a lot of gaps."

After Hughes and Chiao collected pilot study data on comprehensive hearing and balance assessments on a group of people with substance use disorders (SUDs) and a control group without SUDs, their work evolved into a large-scale, multi-site study to examine the implications of SUDs on both hearing and balance, and to determine the factors that increase such risk for people with SUDs.

Substance use disorders continue to rise, affecting more than 35 million people worldwide. Such disorders and overdoses have significantly increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, disproportionately among minority populations. These disorders are associated with hearing and/or vestibular losses — an impairment in the inner ear's balance mechanism — that create communication barriers and reduce physical mobility and independence for those with SUDs.

Michelle Hughes, principal investigator

Researchers are collecting comprehensive hearing and balance data from 1,000 diverse participants — 667 with SUDs and 333 age-, race-, ethnicity- and sex-matched control group participants.

Hughes is working with Patrick Habecker, research assistant professor at UNL's Rural Drug Addiction Research Center, to recruit participants.

Data are gathered through hearing tests, balance assessments and other physical evaluations at Hughes' lab in the Barkley Memorial Center on UNL's East Campus. Through statistical analysis, researchers examine the impacts of other potential social, demographic or comorbidity issues that might be associated with greater risk of hearing or vestibular loss.

Hughes aims to expand clinical knowledge and help health care providers treat those with SUDs.

"Our body is all integrated," she said. "Sometimes, medical care can become so specialized and operate in silos, to where specialists aren't sharing information across disciplines. The result is that it's possible to lose sight of our whole body being an integrated organism."

This project is funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health–National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. Researchers include teams at UNL, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center–El Paso and the University of Illinois Chicago. The UNL portion of the study is funded by a subaward from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, Texas.

Attendees check in for the 2024 CYFS Early Childhood Research Summit.

Early Childhood Research Summit connects research, practice, policy

Creating connections among early childhood research, practice and policy — and how each can enhance the lives of young children and their families — provided the central theme of the 2024 CYFS Early Childhood Research Summit.

Almost 200 attendees, including researchers from across the University of Nebraska system, practitioners, administrators, community partners and policymakers, gathered April 23 at Nebraska Innovation Campus for the daylong, seventh biennial summit, which highlighted the latest research to advance early childhood education and development, and implications for practice and policy.

“Collaboration and partnership are essential to our ability to make positive impacts in the lives of young children and their families — and in the communities in which they live,” said Susan Sheridan, CYFS director, as she welcomed summit participants. “My hope is that each of you — whether you are a researcher, practitioner, administrator, community partner or policymaker — leaves today having forged new connections and strengthened existing ones.”

Keynote speaker Chrishana Lloyd, research scholar at Child Trends, discussed the relationship between research, policy and practice in early care and education, highlighting innovative approaches and strategies to advance research.

Lloyd outlined her research that focused on a historical exploration of early care and education compensation, policy and solutions, particularly among Native American and Black women. She also discussed the work of her National Early Care and Education Workforce Center, and its future goals.

Throughout the day’s breakout sessions and panel discussions, research topics spanned children’s school readiness, parent engagement, special education, health and nutrition, STEM, social-emotional development and workforce development.

Jason Prokop, director of First Five Nebraska, and Walter Gilliam, executive director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, also shared their thoughts with attendees.

Gilliam stressed the importance of Nebraska’s policy, practice and research communities acting together to ensure positive impacts for children and their families.

“All three elements work together to positively impact lives,” he said. “We have to make sure we communicate and collaborate to ensure that the work we’re doing is translating into meaningful change for children and their families.”

Jason Ball, president of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, spoke during lunch, assuring attendees that the Chamber views early childhood research and development as an integral part of Lincoln’s economic growth and future workforce development.

“We are involved in public policy that is essential to shaping the future, collectively as a state, that will serve our families and children better,” he said. "The work you’re doing is important for the future of economic development here in Lincoln and throughout Nebraska."

Nick Pace, interim dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences, shared closing thoughts, noting how early childhood research drives future success. He thanked researchers for their work and collaboration in aligning research, practice and policy.

“Working together is crucial to generating the best outcomes — and to ensuring that high-quality early childhood research continues to flourish and thrive in Nebraska,” Pace said. “I know everyone here will benefit from the research information shared today, and will develop a deeper understanding of our strengths, progress and dedication to early childhood research at the University of Nebraska.”

The event concluded with a poster session that featured more than 20 graduate students showcasing their early childhood research and answering questions about their work.

The summit was presented by CYFS in partnership with the Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research (NAECR). Sponsors included the College of Education and Human Sciences; the Buffett Early Childhood Institute; and First Five Nebraska.

Chrishana Lloyd delivers keynote address.

First Five Nebraska and NAECR Policy Fellows panel

Jason Ball addresses attendees during lunch.

Grand Challenges Catalyst project aims to strengthen early childhood workforce, positive results for children

Back row (from left): Julia Torquati, Carrie Clark, Susan Sheridan, Changmin Yan, HyeonJin Yoon and Soo-Young Hong. Front row (from left): Natalie Koziol, Jenna Finch, Lisa Knoche, Jennifer Leeper Miller and Holly Hatton.

Nearly 28 million children in the U.S. experience childhood adversity — neglect, parental substance abuse, mental illness, racism and bias.

Such hardships cause significant stress to children at crucial stages in their development, putting them at risk for academic difficulties and health and behavioral issues — all of which have consequences into adulthood.

High-quality, equitable early childhood care and education services provided by a diverse and skilled workforce are essential to children's long-term success — and a prosperous future for Nebraska.

However, significant obstacles such as gaps in educator skills and services, increasing behavioral challenges among children, unprecedented levels of staff burnout and turnover, and a stressed early childhood education system leave thousands of children at risk for potential lifelong negative outcomes.

Lisa Knoche, CYFS co-director, is leading a large-scale program aimed at leveraging the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's strengths in early childhood education to create an integrated, educational approach to support professional workforce development and mental wellness among early childhood educators, and to encourage educator retention.

The five-year project is funded by a UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Award, and aligns with the Grand Challenges themes of early childhood education and development, anti-racism and racial equity, and health equity. The team comprises 18 faculty, along with university, state and community partners. Several Nebraska communities are also involved.

The project, Knoche said, is designed to create connections among the university and community partners to promote early childhood workforce development and retention — and as a result, promote children's social-emotional development.

"Our work will help ensure that all children, despite early life adversities, are positioned for lifelong health and social-emotional well-being, which enables them to develop into capable and productive citizens who contribute to Nebraska's vitality and social good," she said.

One program being developed is Connections for Kids, an integrated approach to individualized and inclusive professional development. It is designed to measure and boost children's social and emotional skills, which offer protective factors that improve resilience and reduce the risk of future problems.

"We know that our current interventions being used in early childhood programs are making positive impacts for children and families, but it's not fair to early childhood educators to keep endlessly expanding their roles," Knoche said. "We want to transform the way our interventions are being used in Nebraska early childhood programs by taking good elements from each and combining them into something that will be more efficient and practical for the workforce."

Connections for Kids adopts the most effective elements from three evidence-based interventions widely used in Nebraska early childhood programs — Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME), Getting Ready and Rooted in Relationships/Pyramid.

After developing the program, researchers will test its effectiveness in randomized controlled trials, examining children's social skills and problem behaviors, and teacher practices in early childhood classrooms.

The project will also create an early childhood assessment tool for researchers and early childhood teachers to measure children's social emotional well-being.

"We know there are multiple systems that affect children — situations in both classrooms and the family," Knoche said. "Additionally, teachers' well-being also affects children. That's the strength of this approach. We want to be part of the solution to the early childhood workforce crisis so teachers feel better about what they're doing, know what to do with children and are better able to make connections with families."

Along with Knoche, other project researchers include Carrie Clark, associate professor of educational psychology and assessment lead; Jenna Finch, assistant professor of psychology; Jemalyn Griffin, associate professor of practice of advertising and public relations; Holly Hatton, co-principal investigator and associate professor of child, youth and family studies; Kelli Hauptman, project director, Center on Children, Families and the Law; Soo-Young Hong, associate professor of child, youth and family studies; Natalie Koziol, CYFS research associate professor; Jennifer Leeper Miller, director, Ruth Staples Child Development Lab; Jennifer PeeksMease, assistant vice chancellor of inclusive leadership and learning; Susan Sheridan, co-principal investigator and CYFS director; Julia Torquati, professor of child, youth and family studies; Changmin Yan, associate professor of advertising and public relations; and HyeonJin Yoon, CYFS research assistant professor.

20 YEARS AT A GLANCE

At the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, we are humbled by the number of partners, including participants, researchers, staff, scholars, schools and other collaborators who have embraced the center's mission and contributed to our research impact over the past 20 years. Since 2004, we have housed nearly 400 research grants and our reach has expanded across the U.S. and to 12 countries. We have established specialized academies and signature programs of work that leverage our strengths and address critical needs.

Explore Our Anniversary Website!

The website features videos, an expanded timeline and additional research impacts, while also highlighting key programs and the CYFS Research Network.

cyfs.unl.edu/2024

314,404

An estimated 314,000 infants, children and adolescents have engaged in CYFS research.

28,168

More than 28,000 educators in early childhood settings and K-12 schools have participated in CYFS research.

78,244

More than 78,000 children ages 0-5, along with their families, have participated in CYFS research.

3,262

More than 3,200 early childhood settings and K-12 schools have engaged in CYFS research in the U.S. and abroad.

156

CYFS has partnered with more than 150 rural communities in Nebraska and across the U.S.

425

More than 400 graduate and undergraduate students have engaged in CYFS research and other scholarly activities.

90

CYFS research affiliates include more than 90 faculty, representing 29 academic departments across four campuses.

$148.9M

CYFS' research programs have generated approximately $148,969,402 in grant support.

392

CYFS has supported nearly 400 funded research grants.

111

CYFS has hosted more than 100 conferences, events and workshops.

50

CYFS' national reach includes research activities in all 50 states.

12

CYFS' global reach includes research collaborations in 12 countries.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

FEBRUARY 2004

CYFS Founded

The NU Board of Regents formally establishes the **Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools**, housed within UNL's College of Education and Human Sciences.

OCTOBER 2005

Making a Home in Mabel Lee Hall

CYFS takes up residence in a newly remodeled space in Mabel Lee Hall on UNL's City Campus.

JULY 2009

Rural Education Research Center

CYFS earns a five-year, $10 million U.S. Department of Education grant to establish the National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed), the only one of its kind in the U.S.

APRIL 2010

CYFS Early Childhood Research Summit

The center hosts its first Early Childhood Research Summit, a biennial event that builds connections among practitioners, policymakers and researchers from across Nebraska.

OCTOBER 2013

MAP ACADEMY

MAP Academy

CYFS launches the Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP Academy), an expansion of the Statistics and Research Methodology Unit.

FEBRUARY 2014

CYFS Turns 10

CYFS reflects on a decade of research innovation. Milestones include more than $52 million in cumulative grant dollars and 127 funded projects contributing to its growth and positive impacts.

SEPTEMBER 2015

NAECR

Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research

CYFS establishes the Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research (NAECR), a key partner in UNL's early childhood research efforts.

FEBRUARY 2024

CYFS Turns 20

CYFS celebrates 20 years of research, collaboration and positive impacts, including $148.9 million in cumulative grant dollars and nearly 400 funded projects.

SEPTEMBER 2022

New Home in Carolyn Pope Edwards Hall

A new era for CYFS begins with the opening of Carolyn Pope Edwards Hall, home to UNL's College of Education and Human Sciences. The facility is dedicated to Carolyn Pope Edwards, a leading CYFS research collaborator.

JULY 2018

Nebraska Department of Education NeMTSS Partnership

CYFS formalizes its partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education through the Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS).

JUNE 2016

Early Learning Network

CYFS leads the national Early Learning Network, a multi-year, collaborative research initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and secures $4.5 million for Nebraska's Learning Frontiers study.

MAY 2016

Nebraska-Brazil Early Childhood Partnership

Following a workshop in São Paulo, UNL and the Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation formalize a global early childhood research partnership, leading to three pilot projects and additional collaborations.

Project provides Huskers with hands-on teaching experience in diverse classrooms

Jillian Harpster, principal investigator

Becoming a teacher is not easy. Along with the required formal education, the process requires plenty of patience, preparation, curiosity and enthusiasm.

One less-apparent ingredient required for teaching is the ability to navigate the ever-changing landscape of diversity in schools, including socio-economic, racial, linguistic, cultural and other demographic characteristics.

Research shows hands-on training experiences are instrumental in preparing pre-service educators for the classroom. Preparedness is also linked to retention.

Jillian Harpster, assistant professor of practice in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, is leading a project to help pre-service middle school educators broaden their practical experiences, and give middle-school students opportunities to interact with students from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

"The shortage of teachers, and teacher retention, are issues we need to be aware of," she said. "Often, the preparation experiences students have are not representative of schools they will eventually get jobs in. My hope is that giving these pre-service teachers experience in more demographically representative schools will better prepare them for their classroom work in the field."

Pre-service teaching student leads book club discussion.

Harpster's study is designed to observe and document the effects of one cohort of pre-service secondary English Education majors as they work with seventh and eighth graders from Lincoln's Park Middle School.

As a Title 1 school — a designation aimed at closing opportunity gaps between low-income students and other students — Park Middle School receives funding for additional staff and curriculum resources, school improvement planning, staff training opportunities, smaller class sizes, and enhanced parent and family engagement.

In spring 2024, pre-service teaching students from Harpster's "Literature of Adolescents" class (TEAC 439) led book clubs in which seventh and eighth graders read a young adult novel that centralizes a protagonist from a minoritized or underrepresented group.

Through visits and surveys, Harpster collected data about pre-service educators' comfort in the classroom and engagement with students, as well as students' comfort with the pre-service educators and perspectives on having UNL as a community partner.

Middle schoolers visited UNL's city campus for a tour, met with college students and had lunch at a student dining hall, giving them a glimpse of college life.

Findings will serve as pilot data for future grant proposals and to lobby for financial support for the continued partnership on an institutional/college level.

"We don't want to just prepare pre-service teachers to get them into the classroom; we want to prepare them to stay in the classroom long-term," Harpster said.

This project is funded by an Office of Research and Innovation Research Faculty Seed Grant.

MAP Academy program supports faculty engaged in field-based human subjects research

The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP Academy) has created a new support opportunity available to University of Nebraska faculty engaged in field-based human subjects research.

The Applied Analytics and Data Infrastructure (AADI) Catalyst Program was developed to meet growing demand for the MAP Academy's highly specialized supports.

The program promotes rigorous, high-quality research, while also serving as a catalyst for new collaborations.

The MAP Academy offers support in many content areas and partners with faculty during all stages of research. Example services include providing rigorous methodological and study design support, setting up dynamic data systems, performing in-depth analyses and more.

Successful applicants receive funding for MAP Academy project support. The program is made possible through a grant from the Nebraska Research Initiative.

The awards enable faculty to engage with the MAP Academy team, drawing upon its expertise in rigorous analysis and database support, with the ultimate goal of building collaborations to support future research.

"When our team collaborates with faculty, our goal is always to promote the highest standards of research to maximize their work's impact," said Lorey Wheeler, MAP Academy director. "We are excited for the opportunity to support this group of interdisciplinary researchers through the AADI Catalyst Program and see promise for future collaboration."

The MAP Academy, housed within CYFS, promotes the advancement of methodologies, applied analytics and data infrastructure to support and enhance rigorous research within the social, behavioral, health and educational sciences. Experienced faculty and staff work closely with researchers to understand their needs and ensure high-quality data through advanced statistical and methodological approaches.

2023-24 AADI Catalyst Awards

Lindsay Hastings

Clifton Professor in Mentoring Research, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

"Beyond the Farm Gate: Building a Leadership Development System to Support Rural Community Well-being and Prosperity"

Aprille Phillips

Associate Professor, Educational Administration
University of Nebraska at Kearney

"Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retaining Teachers in Rural Settings"

Natalie Sehi

Extension Educator, Nutrition and Health Sciences
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

"Monthly Meal Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Addressing Adolescent Nutrition Insecurity"

PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Explore the following research programs with a long-standing, proven track record of effectiveness for participants. These are a sampling of the rigorous, high-quality research programs housed within CYFS that impact lives — from infancy through adulthood.

Getting Ready

Getting Ready is an evidence-based family engagement approach that increases school readiness among children ages 5 and younger. The approach supports children's learning and development by strengthening relationships among children, parents and educators. Early childhood educators receive training and ongoing coaching to have lasting impacts.

CHIME

Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators, known as CHIME, was created by Nebraska Extension to support early childhood educators' well-being, enabling them to thrive in their roles and continue to contribute to Nebraska's strong communities and workforce. The professional development intervention promotes mindfulness, self-compassion, reflection and social-emotional learning.

EAT Family Style

EAT Family Style is an innovative, web-based professional development program for child care providers across Nebraska. The program is used by child care staff to promote young children's nutrition using evidence-based responsive feeding practices. EAT Family Style has been shown to improve children's eating habits, autonomy and healthy food choices, which have benefits for their health into adulthood.

NebraskaSTEM

NebraskaSTEM is designed to foster sustainable educational leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) within high-needs rural schools. The program develops educational leadership by supporting elementary school teachers in delivering high-quality STEM instruction to their K-6 students and sharing knowledge within their communities.

TAPP

Teachers and Parents as Partners, or TAPP, is a research-based, problem-solving intervention that improves student outcomes and parent-teacher partnerships in schools. School specialists receive TAPP training and use the approach to support teachers and parents as they implement consistent and effective plans to solve students' behavioral and academic challenges.

Getting Ready

Encouraging Home and School Engagement

Early childhood coach Cynthia Kritenbrink and Belle Scheef try out coaching approaches with Scheef's son, Jaxson.

For the past 20 years, the Getting Ready research program has enhanced school readiness for children age 5 and younger by bringing evidence-based parent engagement strategies to early childhood programs throughout Nebraska.

As one of the first projects launched by CYFS in 2004, Getting Ready has focused on cultivating and fortifying relationships in children's lives, including relationships among parents and the early childhood educators connected to the family.

Getting Ready was initially funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health to Susan Sheridan, CYFS director, and Carolyn Pope Edwards, professor of psychology and child, youth and family studies.

"Getting Ready is an exemplar in translating research-based programming into practice," said Lisa Knoche, CYFS co-director and principal investigator of Getting Ready. "We have leveraged strong findings generated through rigorous research into real-world application across the state."

The Getting Ready approach includes eight strategies and a collaborative family communication structure educators can use during interactions with families during home visits, parent-teacher conferences, informal conversations and more — all to promote relationships that will benefit children's early learning.

Getting Ready encourages family engagement in all aspects of children's development, while building on culturally relevant strengths for both parents and children. Together, educators and families set goals to help children reach their fullest potential.

The program has provided opportunities for struggling young children — particularly those from marginalized backgrounds or dealing with disabilities — to make progress that will help them succeed as they move through school.

More than 5,500 preschool children and 620 early childhood educators across Nebraska and the Midwest have benefited from the Getting Ready program. Preschool children receiving the Getting Ready program were better than 75% of their peers in handling their emotions, managing their behavior and developing and sustaining relationships. They also tested better than 80% of their peers in language and early reading abilities.

Knoche said Getting Ready's steady growth and recognition has been fulfilling.

"Initially, when you're establishing the evidence, you're just a research team," she said. "Getting Ready is now recognized by the early childhood community in Nebraska, and people understand how it can positively impact their program and families served."

KEY IMPACTS

- **Since its inception in 2004, Getting Ready has made significant impacts on more than 5,500 children, ages 0-5, their families and 620 early childhood educators across Nebraska and the Midwest.**
- **Preschoolers who received the Getting Ready program were better than 75% of their peers in handling their emotions, managing their behavior and developing sustaining relationships.**
- **Children who were part of Getting Ready also scored better than 80% of their peers in language and early reading abilities.**
- **After participating in Getting Ready, educators were significantly more confident offering parents opportunities to problem solve and make joint decisions about children.**
- **94% of educators involved in Getting Ready reported improvements in partnerships with families.**

Getting Ready has been funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Administration for Children & Families; National Institutes of Health – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Nebraska Department of Education; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

CHIME

Fostering Educator Well-being

In a typical early childhood classroom with as many as two-dozen children ages 5 and younger, there are bound to be stressful moments for the teacher — and sometimes for the children.

Teachers work hard to meet the needs of many children, while managing various emotional and physical demands, often with limited resources. Following an early childhood curriculum or philosophy, engaging families, maintaining a safe environment and handling conflicts are just some of their daily classroom tasks.

While great efforts are made to support children's well-being in child care settings, far less attention is paid to caregivers' well-being.

One solution to combat stress and promote emotional well-being is CHIME — Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators.

The program was created by Nebraska Extension to support early childhood educators' well-being, enabling them to thrive in their roles and contribute to Nebraska's strong communities and workforce.

The eight-week interactive professional development program can be delivered both in-person and virtually. It provides education and guidance for incorporating mindfulness, self-compassion, social-emotional learning, and reflective practice into early childhood professionals' daily routines, teaching and caregiving.

Miki Montgomery demonstrates a breathing exercise for students at Ruth Staples Child Development Lab.

KEY IMPACTS

- **CHIME has benefited more than 500 teachers, impacting more than 4,500 children, across Nebraska.**
- **Teachers participating in CHIME performed better than 79% of their peers on measures of mental well-being and 70% of their peers on measures of emotional health.**
- **CHIME is practiced in 14 U.S. states and has expanded its reach globally. Caregivers are adapting similar programs in Brazil, Costa Rica and Ghana.**
- **The new CHIME+Families project is delivering the approach to bilingual and Spanish speaking educators and parents — benefiting more than 50 families.**

CHIME also gives caregivers the opportunity to practice reflection and mindfulness with children, and helps families engage in these practices with their children.

Holly Hatton, associate professor of child, youth and family studies, and an Early Childhood Extension specialist, has led the program since 2017, when it was co-created by Hatton, Extension educators and early childhood practitioners in center-based programs in Nebraska.

CHIME's positive impact on children, families, educators, schools and communities has been significant through the years. More than 500 teachers impacting more than 4,500 children across Nebraska have benefited from participating in the program, which is now being practiced in 14 U.S. states.

Teachers participating in CHIME performed better than 79% of their peers on measures of mental well-being and 70% of their peers on measures of emotional health.

Hatton has also collaborated with researchers globally, adapting CHIME to support caregivers, young children and college students in Brazil, Costa Rica and now initiating work in Ghana.

"I'm excited that people find CHIME to be meaningful and impactful," Hatton said. "It has been transformative for many early care environments in Nebraska, and expanding its reach internationally continues to make the program stronger."

CHIME is now being adapted and delivered to bilingual and Spanish speaking educators as well as families through the newly added CHIME+Families approach, which has benefited more than 50 families to date.

Hatton notes that engaging in mindfulness and reflective practice, regardless of profession, boosts health and well-being for both adults and children, including reduced stress, improved emotion management, better sleep quality, increased focus and attention, improved responsive caregiving and enhanced relationships.

CHIME is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Administration for Children and Families.

EAT Family Style

Promoting Healthy Kids

Dipti Dev shares some healthy eating ideas with children.

For centuries, families have gathered around the dinner table to share advice, plan events and recount the day's highs and lows. These mealtime interactions connect families and build support systems — all while cooking up valuable learning opportunities for the youngest family members.

For the past several years, Dipti Dev, Betti and Richard Robinson associate professor of child, youth and family studies and a Nebraska Extension child health behavior specialist, has worked to strengthen those family bonds while promoting healthy eating habits. Her research plate is full of multiple, connected projects aimed at reinforcing childhood nutrition, nutrition security and obesity prevention, particularly through children's mealtime interactions with parents and child care providers.

At the heart of Dev's efforts to help children eat healthier is Ecological Approach to (EAT) Family Style, an innovative, web-based professional development program for child care staff. Comprised of online lessons that include short strategy-based videos, interactive activities and coaching, EAT Family Style is designed to promote evidence-based, responsive feeding best practices in facilities that care for children ages 2-5.

National child care standards recommend child care providers practice responsive feeding where providers sit and eat meals to model healthy eating with children and allow children to select and serve their own portions — an approach that helps children self-regulate their food intake and teaches them to eat based on internal feelings of hunger and fullness.

Research shows children participating in the EAT Family Style approach tend to eat more fruits, vegetables and healthy grains. Providers report that mealtimes are less stressful because participating children are more engaged during meals, and have expanded their vocabularies through mealtime conversations.

"The main goal of EAT Family Style is to build rural community capacity to support children's healthy dietary intake, which prevents obesity and other chronic diseases," Dev said. "We have developed a high-quality program that is being widely adopted nationally and also internationally."

EAT Family Style has grown far beyond Nebraska's borders and is being accessed by child care providers throughout the United States. It is also being implemented internationally by researchers in Portugal who want to implement the program in Lisbon.

Go NAPSACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) has been key driver in Dev's ongoing research. Developed at the University of North Carolina and introduced in Nebraska in 2008, the program provides valuable data to improve child care policies, practices and environments for obesity prevention.

Dev worked with Nebraska's Go NAPSACC team to improve child care policies, systems and environments—all of which informs strategies to enhance child care quality.

This research is funded by grants from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services through a sub-award from U.S. DHHS, multistate Hatch Funding and National Institutes of Health.

KEY IMPACTS

- **Since 2015, EAT Family Style has improved children's eating habits, autonomy and healthy food choices, which have benefits for their health into adulthood.**
- **Children participating in EAT Family Style tend to eat more fruits, vegetables and healthy grains than non-participating children.**
- **Providers report children exposed to EAT Family Style are more engaged during meals, and have expanded their vocabularies through mealtime conversations.**
- **The EAT Family Style program now features seven online learning modules with nearly 70 videos focused on training those who most impact children's eating habits.**
- **EAT Family Style providers improved responsive feeding practices and showed more positive role modeling.**

NebraskaSTEM

Enhancing STEM Access

The NebraskaSTEM research program fosters sustainable educational leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) within high-needs rural schools.

The initiative supports elementary school teachers in delivering high-quality STEM instruction to their K-6 students, while empowering them to share knowledge within their communities through mentorship and professional development.

Participating teachers were chosen from an applicant pool of certified elementary educators who teach, or intend to teach, in rural Nebraska schools where a high number of students receive free or reduced lunch.

"We are positioning these teachers as leaders, who will go back to their schools and share effective STEM teaching with several other teachers," said Amanda Thomas, associate professor of mathematics education in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education and principal investigator of NebraskaSTEM.

During the first year of the five-year fellowship, participants earned a master's degree from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln focused on rural STEM education. They took classes on pedagogy, physics and math through a mix of in-person classes during the summer and online classes during the school year.

For the next four years, the teachers engaged in professional development in teacher leadership, with the goal to craft and implement a STEM initiative for their schools.

With support from an annual stipend, they attended and presented at STEM professional conferences, became elementary STEM leaders and mentors and joined a nationwide community of Noyce Master Teaching Fellows.

Teachers participate in a STEM education class at Henzlik Hall as part of the NebraskaSTEM project for supporting elementary rural leadership.

As NebraskaSTEM master teaching fellows (MTFs), the teachers continue ongoing mentorship and professional development with colleagues in their own schools, sharing their knowledge and skills as they deliver high-quality STEM instruction in their classrooms.

The MTFs also shared their work through scholarly publications, conference presentations and STEM trainings in rural Nebraska schools.

"The teachers in our project continue to be leaders among their peers," Thomas said. "They're in small communities without a lot of professional development opportunities, but they take initiative in their own classrooms, schools and communities to create and enhance engaging STEM instruction for their students."

Thomas said keeping these teachers in the profession in rural schools is satisfying.

"Thanks to the project, we have 14 highly trained teachers with a solid network of peers who had access to professional resources for the past several years to build up what they want to see," Thomas said. "They will continue to make significant impacts in their communities for years to come."

NebraskaSTEM: Supporting Elementary Rural Teacher Leadership is funded by the National Science Foundation's Robert Noyce Scholarship Program.

KEY IMPACTS

- **NebraskaSTEM trained a cohort of 14 teachers who completed a 14-month graduate degree program. All are still teaching.**
- **Despite having scarce professional development opportunities, rural teachers are taking initiative in their own classrooms, schools and communities to create and enhance STEM learning opportunities.**
- **Teachers have led innovative activities, such as makerspace projects and STEM-oriented events. One teacher organized a "STEM Night" in her community, which attracted nearly 80% of the town's population.**
- **Nebraska STEM has fostered a strong community among rural elementary teachers, who continue to lead and support one another.**

TAPP

Promoting Teacher-Parent Partnerships

For decades, a family-school intervention program has expanded its geographic footprint. From projects in Nebraska, Colorado, Missouri and Wisconsin to rural Appalachian states, and across cyberspace online, Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP) continues to grow — and help teachers, children and their families thrive.

Previously known as Conjoint Behavioral Consultation, TAPP is a research-based, problem-solving intervention that improves student outcomes and parent-teacher partnerships in schools. School specialists receive TAPP training and use the approach to support teachers and parents as they implement consistent and effective plans to solve students' behavioral and academic challenges.

Since its inception, TAPP research has expanded to include TAPP Online, which utilizes online training modules to deliver professional development to school specialists; Tele-TAPP, a partnership between UNL and East Tennessee State University which uses distance technology to bring the intervention to rural Appalachian communities; and TAPP para Familias Latinas, which focuses on strengthening and supporting partnerships among parents and teachers of Latinx students.

Most of TAPP's research — implemented by CYFS researchers and researchers around the country — has focused on students who, despite great potential, struggle to develop and use effective social, behavioral or academic skills.

Some students had identified disabilities while others exhibited challenges that interfered with their learning.

Aquilina Urias (right) and her son, former participants in TAPP para Familias Latinas

KEY IMPACTS

- **More than 700 struggling students and their parents and teachers across hundreds of schools have benefited from TAPP.**
- **Students receiving TAPP performed better than two-thirds of their peers on measures of academic performance, social skills and positive behaviors.**
- **Children receiving TAPP show improved academic behaviors, such as active, engaged time and compliance, and improved social behaviors.**
- **TAPP benefits for teachers include improved classroom climate, better relationships with parents and enhanced management skills for students with behavioral issues.**
- **Parents report improved communication with children and teachers, and meaningful input on classroom goals and strategies.**

Some simply lacked access to support services in their schools and communities.

"I have always believed that if we strive to make a lasting, positive difference for children, we must focus on enhancing the environments within which they live, and supporting the actions of the adults in those environments — the parents and teachers," said Susan Sheridan, CYFS director and developer of TAPP. "In so doing, we are creating a context for enhancing relationships and outcomes not just for one specific child, but for children well into the future. That is at the heart of how TAPP transforms lives, schools and communities."

More than 700 struggling students and their parents and teachers across hundreds of schools have benefited from TAPP. Students receiving TAPP performed better than two-thirds of their peers on measures of academic performance, social skills and positive behaviors.

One large-scale randomized trial across 82 classrooms found that students whose teachers and parents participated in the TAPP process demonstrated greater increases in adaptive behavior and social skills than students whose teachers and parents did not participate in TAPP.

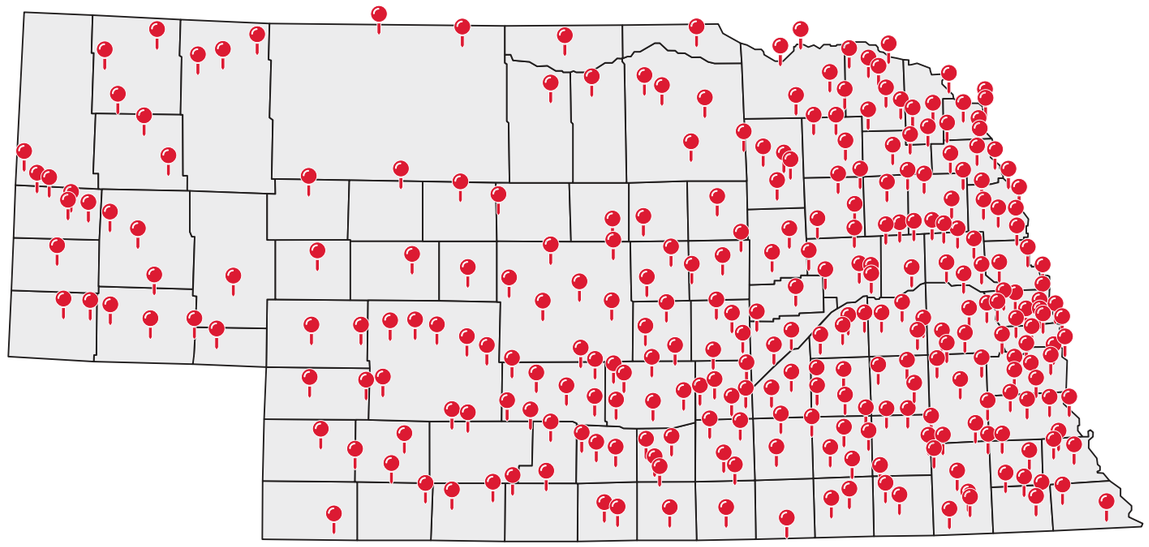
"Our research has documented consistently the efficacy of TAPP in improving the lives of these students by building up their skillsets, promoting their parents' and teachers' capacities to address challenges and support growth, and fostering very positive relationships between students' homes and schools," Sheridan said. "By incorporating technology into the preparation of school practitioners through on-demand, web-based modules and distance coaching, I expect we will continue making significant impacts moving forward."

TAPP has been funded by grants from the Institute of Education Sciences.

Landscape of Support

STATEWIDE IMPACT

In support of UNL's land grant mission, CYFS' research activities extend across all 93 counties in Nebraska, benefiting communities throughout the state.



RESEARCH IMPACT

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

1,023 Total grants submitted

40% Grant submission success rate (based on known decisions)

392 Total grants funded

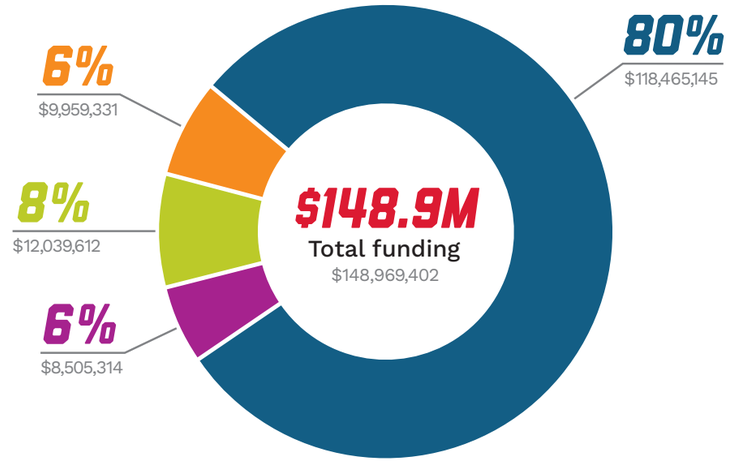
$26.48 Return rate to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln for every $1 invested

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The chart 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.

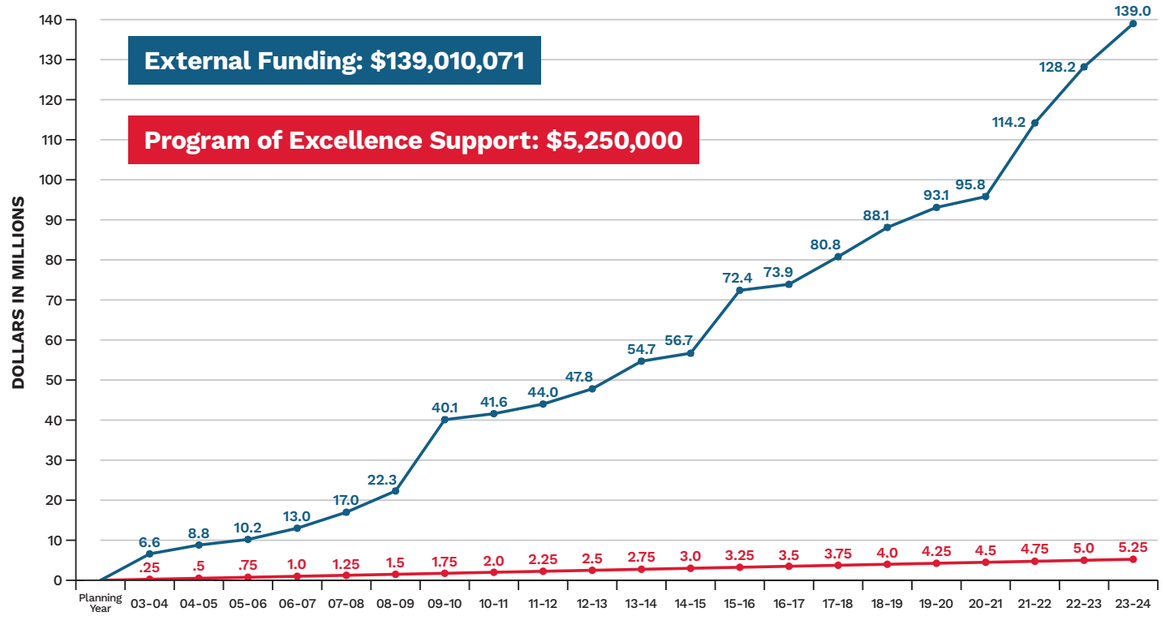
- Federal (174 grants)
- State (41 grants)
- Foundation (92 grants)
- Internal (85 grants)

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.



2024-25 Internal Grants & Awards

UNL Grand Challenges 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 Innovation, enables new interdisciplinary projects to move the needle toward the development of solutions for some of humanity's most significant problems and opportunities.

UNL Layman Awards

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

One Grand Challenges grant and three Layman Awards were awarded to CYFS faculty and research affiliates in 2024.

GRAND CHALLENGES CATALYST COMPETITION PLANNING GRANT

Alex Mason

Professor, CYFS & Child, Youth & Family Studies

"Ethical and Equitable Reintegration: Transitioning Youth from Out-of-Home Placement to the Mainstream Classroom"

More than 25,000 youth reside in detention facilities on any given day in the United States, and about two-thirds of those youth do not successfully re-engage with school upon their release, largely due to an absence of effective transition supports, including for those students who have been expelled.

Racially and ethnically minoritized youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice population and their school failure is a key driver of the "school-to-prison pipeline," estimated to cost taxpayers $35 billion annually.

Although Nebraska enjoys an 89% high school graduation rate, the suffering experienced by the remaining 11% is staggering and is disproportionate for minoritized youth.

Researchers aim to help UNL take leadership in ameliorating the racially biased "school-to-prison pipeline" and be the national distribution hub for effective supports for school success and recidivism reduction in juvenile justice-involved youth.

Although states are required to provide school-coordinated services to transitioning youth, no standardized transition programs are available to educators. Schools typically provide minimal support for these youth, and inequitable practices — including zero tolerance policies — are common.

Researchers will address this critical need by developing sustainable, effective programming that enables schools and teachers to support young people transitioning from detention and other out-of-school placements (e.g., expulsion) back into the community and by promoting positive adjustment, encouraging school success and reducing recidivism.

During the nine-month planning period, researchers will build a multi-disciplinary team to complete the six-step Intervention Mapping Process, culminating in a school transition program for diverse juvenile justice and expelled youth. The team will then enact multi-site implementation and evaluation plans and establish a UNL-based distribution hub for ongoing training and technical assistance with national reach.

The outcome of both phases will be a research-informed, culturally sensitive juvenile justice school transition program with sustainable nationwide dissemination.

The long-term goal is to promote equity in school success (e.g., via literacy education) and reduce recidivism.

LAYMAN AWARDS

Mun Yuk Chin

Assistant Professor, Counseling Psychology

"A Grounded Theory Study of Mental Health Practitioners' Financial Precarity, Work Satisfaction and Mental Health"

Nebraska faces a critical shortage of mental health practitioners (MHPs) which limits communities' access to mental health care. Given preliminary research on the links between mental health practitioners' financial stress and poor work and health outcomes, there is a critical need to determine how economic marginalization affects Nebraska-based practitioners' mental health and the sustainability of their work.

Using a grounded theory design, this study will identify how financial stress and precarity develop for mental health practitioners and explore if and how they impact practitioners' work satisfaction and personal mental health.

Results have the potential to boost interventions that promote Nebraska-based practitioners' well-being and retention.

Sungeun Kang

Assistant Professor, School Psychology

"Refining a School-Based Intervention for Autistic Youth with Emotional Dysregulation Through Engagement with School Mental Health Professionals"

Individuals with autism often struggle with irritability and behavior challenges stemming from emotion dysregulation (ED). ED in autistic individuals has been associated with increased hospitalization, school disciplinary actions, unsuccessful transitions to college and employment, and the use of psychotropic medications. Few evidence-based interventions exist, and there are no school-based interventions specifically targeting ED in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Regulating Together (RT) is a distinctive, evidence-based group intervention program specifically designed to address ED in ASD. Regulating Together in Schools (RT-S) is an adapted version of RT, tailored for school settings to reach more students by leveraging existing resources.

To determine the feasibility and acceptability of implementing this intervention in public schools, it is crucial to integrate the intervention into the school's culture and consider factors such as student demographics, staffing and long-term sustainability. Thus, it is imperative to seek the perspectives of key stakeholders from various public schools to optimize the RT-S curriculum.

Researchers aim to produce a refined RT-S intervention for delivery to autistic youth in public school settings through the active involvement of school mental health professionals.

Jing Wang

Assistant Professor, Special Education & Communication Disorders

"Using Generative AI to Enhance Mathematics Teaching Practices for Special Education Teachers in Rural Areas"

Despite the significant potential of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in educational design, many teachers need more familiarity and confidence in integrating GAI into their teaching practices. GAI promises a transformation in special education with its capacity for interactive learning experiences, individualized instruction and real-time feedback.

This study aims to lay the groundwork for designing a GAI-centric professional development program, enhancing special education teachers' competency in mathematics instruction for students experiencing mathematics difficulties or disabilities.

Researchers will explore special education teachers' attitudes and experiences with GAI in their mathematics instruction, evaluating the effects of the pilot professional development program on their GAI literacy and practical skills in GAI use.

Findings will inform enhancement of the professional development intervention and provide necessary data to support competitive external funding applications.

Ultimately, this work has the potential to improve education outcomes for students with or at risk for mathematics disabilities via a tested professional development intervention.

Active Grants & Contracts

The following grants and contracts received new or ongoing funding during the 2023-24 fiscal year. Principal Investigators (PIs), including those identified as co-PIs for each project, are listed below.

Federal Awards

Administration for Children & Families

An Investigation of the Potential Benefits of Nature Exposure on Emotion Regulation of Preschool-aged Children
PIs: Donger Liu, Julia Torquati

Can Family Home Child Care Providers' Preparation and Serving Practices Influence Children's Vegetable Consumption?
PIs: Saima Hasnin, Dipti Dev

Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME): Evaluating the Use of Mindfulness and Compassion to Promote Early Head Start/Head Start Education Staffs Well-Being
PIs: Holly Hatton, 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: Dipti Dev, Donnia Behrends

Getting Ready Preschool Development Grant (PDG) (subaward through Nebraska Children and Families Foundation)
PI: Lisa Knoche

HSSCO Needs Assessment (subaward through Nebraska Department of Education)
PI: Holly Hatton

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

Centers for Disease Control

ICRC Partnership (subaward through University of Iowa)
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

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

Characterizing the Effects of Chronic Substance Misuse on Auditory and Vestibular Function (subaward through Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center)
PI: Michelle Hughes

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

Development and Pilot Evaluation of an Online Mentoring Program to Prevent Adversities Among Trans and Other Gender Minority Youth
PI: Katie Edwards

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

Foundations of Patient-Oriented AAC Access for Children: Evaluating Picture-Based P300-Brain-Computer Interface Control and Design Preferences
PI: Kevin Pitt

Neural Predictors of Speech Perception Outcomes in Adults with Cochlear Implants (collaboration with Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior [Lead Center])
PI: Yingying Wang

Pilot Evaluation of a Lakota-Centered Lifespan Mentoring Program to Reduce Alcohol Related Problems and Promote Holistic Wellbeing
PIs: Joseph Gardella, Katie Edwards

Racial Disparities for the Effects of Parental Marijuana Use on Youth Marijuana and Other Substance Use (subaward through University of Nebraska Medical Center)
PI: Lorey Wheeler

Sexual Assault Recovery Among Sexual Minority Women: A Longitudinal, Multi-Level Study (subaward through University of Washington)
PI: Katie Edwards

Strategic Treatment Assessment with Youth (STAY): A Measurement-based Care Approach to Promote Treatment Retention among Racial and Ethnic Minoritized Youth with Depression or Suicide Risk (subaward through Yale University)
PI: Lorey Wheeler

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

Enhancing Early Childhood Educators Reflective Practice and Content Knowledge to Increase Children's Capacity for Science Talk
PIs: Soo-Young Hong, Deepika Menon, Doug Golick, Lisa Poppe, LaDonna Werth

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

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Youth Civic Engagement Using Simulations and Design Thinking
PIs: Maria Rosario de Guzman, Surin Kim

U.S. Department of Education

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 Teleconsultation with Parents and Teachers to Promote Student Social-Behavioral Outcomes
PIs: Amanda Witte, Susan Sheridan, HyeonJin Yoon

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

Growing in the Good Life (subaward through University of Nebraska Medical Center)
PIs: Lorey Wheeler, Charlie Lewis

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

New INSIGHTS (subaward through INSIGHTS Intervention, LLC)
PI: Gwen Nugent

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

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

Treatment Intensity Factors Related To Efficient And Effective Communication
PI: Birdie Ganz

WORDS (Workshops on Reading Development Strategies) for Pandemic Recovery in Nebraska (subaward through University of California, Irvine)
PI: Pam Bazis

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

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

Animating History; Using Film as an Educational Tool to Tell Personal Stories of Enslaved Families Who Sought Freedom through the Law
Funding Source: UNL Layman Award
PIs: Michael Burton, William G. Thomas, Kwakiutl Dreher

An Online Family-based Program to Reduce Inequity among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth of Color
Funding Source: William T. Grant Foundation
PI: Katie Edwards

Attachment Security and the Gut-Brain Axis: A Nationwide Sample
Funding Source: UNL R&I Biomedical Research Seed Grant
PI: Patty Kuo

Developing an Interdisciplinary Global Forced Migration and Health Collaborative (FMHC)
Funding Source: UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition/ Planning Grant Award
PIs: Julie Tippens, Sonya Turkman, Emira Ibrahimpasic, John Porter

EAT for Prevention
Funding Source: UNL R&I Revision Awards
PI: Dipti Dev

Educare Evaluation 2023-2024
Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Fund
PIs: Lisa Knoche, Rachel Schachter, Soo-Young Hong, Amy Napoli

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 Multidimensional Effects of Pre-service Teachers' Work in Title I Schools
Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant
PI: Jillian Harpster

Exploring Principal Leadership's Longitudinal Impacts on High School Students' Racial Gaps in Mathematics: Evidence from National HSLS09 Data
Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant
PI: Jiangang Xia

Helping Youth Thrive: History of Social Sciences in 4-H Video Production/ Study Guides/Web Content
Funding Source: National 4-H Council (subaward through Oregon State University)
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

How Religious Beliefs Influence People's Perspectives on Poverty and Poverty Assistance Programs
Funding Source: Midwest Sociological Society
PI: Jamy Rentschler

Inspiring Outcomes for Children through Equitable Early Childhood Education Experiences (E4)
Funding Source: UNL Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition/ Catalyst Grant Award
PIs: Lisa Knoche, Susan Sheridan, Holly Hatton

Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction to Increase Efficiency and Word-level Literacy Skill Outcomes for Struggling Students
Funding Source: UNL Research Council Faculty Seed Grant
PI: Pam Bazis

Investigating The Impact of Elaborative Conversation Strategies Intervention on Parent-Child Interactions and Preschool Children's Science Learning Using a Single-Case Experimental Design
Funding Source: Buffett Early Childhood Institute
PIs: Yao Yao, Soo-Young Hong

Learning Begins at Birth
Funding Source: Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
PI: Holly Hatton

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

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

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

Pilot Test of a Nervous System Informed Intervention to Increase Embodied Affirmation of Nonbinary People
Funding Source: UNL Layman Award
PI: Katelyn Coburn

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

Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers (RESPECT) Across Nebraska
Funding Source: Early Educator Investment Collaborative
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, Louise Lynch-Obrien, 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

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

The Effects of Embedding Augmentative and Alternative Communication within Storybook Reading and Play Time for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Funding Source: UNL Layman Award
PI: Ciara Ousley

The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics & Psychometrics Applied Analytics and Data Infrastructure Services
Funding Source: UNL NRI New Core or Service Funding Request
PIs: Lorey Wheeler, Susan Sheridan

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

Affiliates & Personnel

CYFS Research Affiliates

Research affiliates make up a network of over 90 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.

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