



# Nebraska's Prenatal-to-Age-3 Plan

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## Pritzker Children's Initiative Planning & Implementation Grants

*Creating a stronger policy framework to support the development of infants and toddlers at risk*

### Planning Grant

In 2019, First Five Nebraska was awarded a Pritzker Children's Initiative Prenatal-to-Age-3 planning grant focused on significantly improving, through policy change, the healthy development and school readiness of Nebraska children from the prenatal period to age 3.

A stakeholder-informed policy landscape analysis, conducted in close collaboration with the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning teams, identified policy changes that could create measurable improvements in children's outcomes in these categories:

- High-quality early childhood care and education services
- Parent engagement and support
- State system efficiencies and capacity to support integration
- State system efficiencies and capacity for data integration
- Access to essential services for early childhood development

*First Five Nebraska aspires to equitably expand high-quality services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families with a target goal of a 25% increase (15,500) by 2023 and a long-term goal of a 50% increase (30,050) in children and families served by high-quality programs and policies.*

### Implementation Grant

The Nebraska Prenatal-to-Age-3 plan moves us toward a system in which state and community leaders work together to provide health, mental health, high-quality early learning and development and social service supports for children prenatal through age 3 and their families. This will be accomplished by supporting policies to:

- **Increase the number of low-income families with children prenatal to age 3 who are connected to essential and high-quality health, development and social-emotional support services.**
  - Increase access to programs such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Early Development Network (EDN)/Early Intervention (IDEA, Part C).
  - Increase access to screening and referrals to quality programs through entities such as Nebraska Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (NPQIC) and Help Me Grow.

- Expand home-visitation programs by maintaining existing funding for Sixpence while securing new funding such as Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and Early Head Start.
- **Increase availability of affordable, high-quality child care for low-income infants and toddlers across diverse settings.**
  - Restructure reimbursement rates to incentivize and pay for the cost of quality.
  - Support providers in upward movement in Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) and accessing the School Readiness Tax Credit.
  - Increase quality and capacity through local business partnerships and community engagement.
  - Support information and resources for parents and families such as a public awareness campaign on quality child care and education, Learning Begins at Birth and Child Care Referral Network (CCRN).
- **Address sustainability, accountability and effectiveness in early childhood systems.**
  - Align with Nebraska's Early Childhood Strategic Plan and Workforce Commission recommendations to collaborate and leverage resources to achieve common goals.
  - Support development and implementation of Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) buildout.
  - Support redesign of Nebraska's early childhood governance structure and relevant financing mechanisms to eliminate barriers to offering full-day, year-round, high-quality affordable early childhood care and education.

*Nebraska's long-term goal is to ensure families have strong early childhood options supported by an aligned early childhood system. This involves community leaders working together to provide opportunities for high-quality early care and learning starting at birth, and coordinating with a full suite of health, mental health and social service supports so children and families can thrive.*

## **Leadership: Prenatal-To-Three (PN-3) Coalition**

State agency leaders, nonprofits, direct service providers, higher education, philanthropy and policymakers have long been recognized as leading the charge on behalf of our state's youngest and most vulnerable children. However, the PN-3 Coalition partnership also includes business and economic leaders to strengthen quality early childhood programming as a key strategy for economic development and workforce productivity. Collectively, PN-3 Coalition stakeholders represent the perspectives of working parents, employers, economic developers and child care providers, with special focus on infants, toddlers and prenatal mothers who face equity challenges.

For more information or to get involved, contact Amy Bornemeier, [abornemeier@firstfive-nebraska.org](mailto:abornemeier@firstfive-nebraska.org)



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