



June 25-27, 2017 | Omaha, Neb.

Kickoff Meeting: Building State Leadership

Magnolia Hotel Omaha • 1615 Howard St., Omaha, NE 68102

Agenda

The kickoff meeting will set the stage for the work with the Early Learning Fellows and will provide issue content in a peer learning community setting with additional facilitated small group time. Goals include:

- Build knowledge among legislators about new research and policy.
- Promote an exchange of ideas and solutions related to early learning, the early achievement gap, and many other birth-to-age-8 issues.
- Introduce and connect legislators to other legislative leaders.
- Provide Fellows with practical information they can use in their state.
- Facilitate access to leading researchers and policy experts.

Sunday, June 25, 2017 • Courtyard

6-8 p.m. Reception and Meet and Greet

Introduction: Rochelle Finzel, NCSL, Denver

Monday, June 26, 2017 • Lavender Ballroom – 1st Floor

8-8:30 a.m. Breakfast and Networking
Magnolia Ballroom – 1st Floor

8:30-9 a.m. Welcome and Overview of the Day

9-10:30 a.m. Brain Science: How Early Experiences Shape the Brain

Advances in neuroscience, molecular biology and genomics now help us better understand why healthy development in the early years provides the building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity and lifelong health. The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through a process that begins early in life, continues into adulthood, and is powerfully affected by the experiences and environment of relationships in which children develop. Learn how these early experiences are built into our bodies and brains, and about the complex set of skills scientists believe are foundational for success in school and in life.

Introduction: Julie Poppe, NCSL, Denver

Speaker

- Melanie Berry, University of Oregon

- 10:30-10:45 a.m. Break**
- 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Economic Return on Early Childhood and Sustaining Gains**
 Research shows that early childhood education has a strong rate of return on investment. How do economists quantify the rate of return? Research shows that disadvantaged children who attend high-quality early childhood programs are less likely to start kindergarten behind, need special education, repeat a grade and are more likely to graduate from high school. They also tend to have higher earnings, pay more in taxes, and commit less crime.
- Moderator:** Rochelle Finzel, NCSL, Denver
Speaker
- Rob Grunewald, Minneapolis Federal Reserve
- 12:15-1 p.m. Lunch**
Magnolia Ballroom – 1st Floor
- 1-2 p.m. Nebraska’s Achievement Gap Challenge: What Other States Can Learn**
 Forty-one percent of Nebraska’s children under 5 are at risk of school failure. Hear from the Buffett Early Childhood Institute about their work and collaborating with stakeholders to improve early childhood outcomes, including an early childhood plan in 11 school districts surrounding Omaha.
- Introduction:** Jessie Rasmussen, Buffett Early Childhood Fund
Speaker
- Sam Meisels, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, University of Nebraska
- 2-3:15 p.m. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Early Childhood Provisions**
 This session will summarize preschool through third grade elements of several ESSA state plans that were submitted in April 2017, including language around the new “non-academic” fifth indicator, workforce, long-term goals, social emotional learning and supporting transitions. The Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start will also be discussed as they relate to ESSA implementation.
- Moderator:** Matt Weyer, NCSL, Denver
Speaker
- Danielle Ewen, EducationCounsel, D.C
- 3:15-3:30 p.m. Break**
- 3:30-4:30 p.m. Sing a Song of Sixpence: An Early Childhood Public-Private Partnership**
 The Nebraska Legislature in 2006 established the Early Childhood Education Endowment Grant Program. Hear about the innovative approach of matching public and private investments to promote high-quality center-based care, home visitation programs and child care partnerships for Nebraska’s at-risk infant and toddlers. Learn

about how the state measures outcomes and ensures accountability on this investment.

Moderator: Julie Poppe, NCSL, Denver

Speakers

- Michael Medwick, First Five Nebraska
- Amy Bornemeier, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

4:30-5 p.m. **Closing Thoughts and Reflections**

6-8 p.m. **Reception & Dinner**

Omaha Press Club - 1620 Dodge Street, #2200, Omaha, NE 68102

Tuesday, June 27, 2017 • Magnolia Ballroom – 1st Floor

8-8:30 a.m. **Breakfast**

8:30-9 a.m. **Planning and Networking**

9 a.m. **Bus departs for tour/site visit**

9:15-11:30 a.m. **Educare and Kellom Elementary Site Visit**

2123 Paul Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Take part in a site visit to Educare of Omaha at Kellom Elementary, a nationally recognized, high-quality early childhood program that produces positive results for low-income children and parents. Learn how programs like Educare are helping at-risk children prepare for kindergarten success and achieve academic benchmarks into the early grades. Discuss the role that state legislatures can play in developing high-quality early childhood education and learn how strategic collaborations and partnerships, blended funding and parent involvement can achieve better outcomes for children, families and communities.

Introduction: Alison May, NCSL, Denver

Speakers

- Jessie Rasmussen, Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- Virginia Bowers, Educare of Omaha

11:30 a.m. **Bus returns to Magnolia Hotel**

11:45 a.m. to Noon **Next Steps and Wrap Up**

Box lunches will be available and continued, informal, conversations with Fellows and NCSL staff.

*This event is made possible by the generous support of the following sponsors:
the Alliance for Early Success, Buffett Early Childhood Fund and Heising-Simons Foundation*