

Parents and Child Care Providers Selected for Parent Ambassadorship in Nebraska

18 Parent Ambassadors will strengthen their leadership and advocacy skills through a year-long leadership and advocacy program focused on early childhood.

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES, October 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC) has selected its next class of Parent Ambassadors to participate in a year-long leadership and advocacy program. The 18 Parent Ambassadors representing a diverse demographic of Nebraskans will spend the next year learning about the legislative process, engaging with policymakers, meeting local and statewide early childhood organization leaders, and collaborating with each other.



This is the second year for Parent Ambassadors in Nebraska, which will conclude its inaugural class in December. The Nebraska program is based on a successful model implemented in five other states and was re-envisioned in Nebraska to include child care providers as participants.

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“Parents and providers of young children feel the impacts of policy decisions the most, and yet they are often not included at the decision-making table,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, CEO at NECC. “We’ve seen our inaugural class of Parent Ambassadors inspired to lead change in their communities, including helping other parents to register to

vote and working with a local nonprofit to expand resources for Hispanic families. We're very excited to see this grassroots advocacy continue with the new class."

The 2023 class officially kicked off in September – a deliberate change from the first class. Program Manager Ilissa Talkington said this was done to allow more opportunities for the Parent Ambassadors to engage during the legislative session in Nebraska.

"Supporting and developing the advocacy skills of parents and providers is a cornerstone of their ambassadorship, so building that foundation before the legislature convenes was a key consideration for future classes," said Talkington. "Many decisions made during the legislative session directly impact the families in our state, and Parent Ambassadors are able to provide critical insight on how these decisions could impact parents with young children."

Talkington said that there is natural and passionate buy-in when parents and providers are invited to the table. "We often say in our group, 'Not about us without us,' meaning that we can't solve problems or tackle issues without those most directly affected being part of the solution."

Members of the 2023 Class of Parent Ambassadors include:

- Sarah Azara, Omaha
- Mirian Balcazar Ruiz, Omaha
- Víctor Edén Calvo Menes, O'Neill
- Marlen Diaz Aguilar, O'Neill
- Sandra Hernandez, Omaha
- Alicia Hilario, Omaha
- Rebekah Hoof, Alliance
- Shayna Hudson, Gering
- Madelyn Johnson, Ayr
- Lisa Jones, Cairo
- Sarah Landell, Dannebrog
- Kaycee Meister, Elkhorn
- Kiarra Morgan, Omaha
- Irasema Nafarrate, Omaha
- Jaslynn O'Doherty, Omaha



- Anilu Saavedra, Bellevue
- Amber Serrano-Wiley, Waterloo
- Tiffany Weiss, Kearney

To learn more about Parent Ambassadors, visit <https://nebraskaeearly.org/neambassador/>

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About Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative

The Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative is a statewide nonprofit organization established in 2014 dedicated to giving parents and child care providers the guidance and resources they need to give children the education they deserve. Learn more at nebraskaeearly.org

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