

Sixpence



early learning fund

Nebraska's Early Childhood Education Endowment Grant Program

To Fund Early Childhood Care and Education Programs and
Services for Children Birth to Age Three At Risk of School Failure
and Their Families

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

December 2008



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I. HISTORY OF THE ENDOWMENT

In 2006, LB1256 was passed by the Nebraska Legislature establishing the Early Childhood Education Endowment (Endowment) Grant Program to serve children birth to age three. The Endowment expands the existing Early Childhood Education Grant Program <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ECH/ECGrantProg.htm> which currently prioritizes services for at-risk three and four-year-olds. The Endowment is a public-private partnership funded with \$40 million from the state and an additional \$20 million from the private sector to be raised within five years. The earnings generated from the public-private dollars are deposited periodically throughout the year into an Endowment Grant fund and will be used primarily for grants to school districts to provide services for infants and toddlers who are most at risk of school failure.

The public-private Endowment is a permanent source of funding that will be available for quality early childhood programs and services. The Endowment serves as a cornerstone for the citizens of Nebraska to enhance the opportunities for children who are most at risk to be successful in school and later in life.

II. PURPOSE OF THE ENDOWMENT GRANTS

The purpose of the Endowment Grants is to help promote children's opportunities to experience positive environments that provide for their healthy growth and development during their earliest years. The Endowment grants are available to promote community level partnerships that focus on meeting the developmental needs of very young children and to support parents as a child's first and most important teacher, helping to ensure their success in school and later in life.

Research indicates the most critical period of brain development for children is between the ages of birth until age three, and that their early experiences and environments are significant for preparing them to enter school. Wherever children are during their waking hours, whether it is in a loving grandparent's home, their own home or in an out-of-home early care and education environment, children need environments that will foster their healthy development and lay the building blocks for future learning.



Not all Nebraska children live in environments that help them to thrive. Between thirty and forty percent of infants and toddlers in Nebraska are at risk of failing in school because of a variety of life circumstances.

Providing quality, comprehensive early childhood services to infants and toddlers who are most at risk of school failure requires partnerships at many levels. The Endowment Fund model is predicated on the power of partnerships—between public and private funders, between the Nebraska Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, and between the state and local levels. The Endowment Grants will be provided to programs that incorporate meaningful partnerships at the local level between, at a minimum, the local school district and community-based providers of services for infants and toddlers. By partnering and matching local resources with Endowment funds, communities are better equipped to continue to address the growing needs of infants and toddlers who are most at risk across Nebraska.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Board of Trustees (trustees) www.earlychildhoodendowment.org/boardoftrustees.html is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to fund new and existing early childhood programs and services across the state for children up to age three and their families. Applicants eligible to submit proposals are school districts and cooperatives of school districts.¹ Eligible applicants are required to partner with at least one other community-based organization. Community partners may be not-for-profit or for-profit service providers.

¹ Under State Statute 79-1104, Educational Service Units (ESUs) are defined as an eligible applicant. Since passage of the legislation and adoption of the constitutional amendment, it has been determined that ESU's do not meet eligibility as the primary applicant. Due to the funding source for the public dollars, monies have to be distributed to the "common school". While ESUs can not be the primary applicant, they are eligible as one of the community partners. School districts may contract with ESUs for program management.



IV. TARGETED POPULATION

The targeted population for Endowment funds is infants and toddlers (birth to age three) who are most at risk of failure in school. For the purpose of this grant, at risk* is defined as:

- Children (birth to age three) whose family income would qualify them for participation in the federal free or reduced lunch program;
- Children (birth to age three) who were born prematurely or at low birth weight as verified by a physician;
- Children (birth to age three) who reside in a home where a language other than spoken English is used as the primary means of communication;
- Children (birth to age three) whose parents are younger than eighteen or who have not completed high school.

*There are many additional factors that cause infants and toddlers to be considered "at risk;" however, applications for Endowment funds must indicate that funds will go to serve infants and toddlers who have, at a minimum, one or more of the above criteria. Additional risk factors may be targeted.

While Endowment grant funds may only be used to serve children who meet the above definition of at risk, applicants who serve children who are not considered at risk are encouraged to apply and include the dollars expended on those children as part of the required matching funds for the Endowment grant.



V. RATIONALE FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE THREE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Some children start school with significant delays and deficiencies in such areas as language and literacy, health and physical development and social-emotional skills. Decades of scientific research provides evidence that early experiences in a child's life shape their future learning capacity and ability to develop healthy relationships with others. Longitudinal studies indicate that quality services lay a solid foundation that puts children on an early trajectory for school success and may allow children to continue to benefit from programs and services they may receive when they are three and four years old. For most children who are at risk, the longer we wait to intervene, the wider the educational gap will be when children enter kindergarten and the harder and more expensive it will be to close that gap.

Nebraska ranks fourth in the nation for the percentage of families with children under age five in which all available parents are working. Seventy-five percent of these children are in some type of out-of-home environment. Not only can children of working parents benefit from quality early childhood care and education, but parents who stay at home can also benefit by receiving coaching and guidance that help them better promote their child's development and learning capacity.

Endowment grants will allow community partners to come together to develop and/or expand quality early childhood programs and services that target the needs of the children who are most at risk in their communities.

VI. EXPECTATION FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Schools interested in this funding opportunity are required to partner with programs that exist within the community, including but not limited to, Early Head Start/Head Start and early childhood care and education programs. Community-based partners are also encouraged to approach their local school districts to propose options for working together. Applications will not be accepted from applicants that do not include partnerships.



Local Early Childhood Advisory Committee Applicants are required to form a local early childhood advisory committee that includes early childhood professionals, families and community members. If there is an Early Head Start program that serves the community, that program must be represented on the local early childhood advisory committee. Additional representation might include the following: existing early childhood care and education providers, preschools, Head Start programs, providers of early intervention and early childhood special education services, resource and referral agencies, parents, and health and social service personnel. An existing early childhood advisory group can meet the requirement for the advisory group if the representation includes those persons listed above and the mission of the group is expanded to encompass the purpose of this program. The local early childhood advisory committee must approve the grant application, and each organization represented on the local early childhood advisory committee must provide a statement specifying how they were involved in the planning for the application.

Involvement of Partners in Grant Preparation All program partners must participate in preparing this application, be involved in the planning process, and actively participate as members of the advisory committee. A Statement of Partnership Commitment from each partner must accompany the application. This statement should list critical elements of all partners' participation such as resources, time commitment, and ongoing representation that the partners (including the applicant school district) are committing to the partnership. A Partnership Statement of Commitment form is included with the application package.

It is expected that grantees establish formal written agreements with the partners by the end of the first year of the grant. These agreements should define each partner's commitment and must be kept on file with the grantee school district. School districts must provide copies of the written agreement to partners as requested. More information on developing successful community partnerships can be found in the list of resources.



Partnership Development The Endowment Grant funds are intended to be utilized to maximize the use of all resources, new and existing, in providing high quality services to infants and toddlers who are most at risk. Applicants are encouraged to expand or replicate existing services, in order to serve more children, but not duplicate services. Communities find that working through a planning process supports agencies and organizations in moving toward the level of partnership which results in efficient utilization of interagency resources. The partnership development process includes, but is not limited to, the following key steps:

- Identify the service area you intend to serve and engage potential partners located within the service area in the planning process
- Conduct a community needs assessment to determine the unmet need for services targeted to children birth to age three who are most at risk and their families. Needs assessments should include the identification of existing early childhood programs and services, area(s) of duplication and gap(s) in services, and the need for additional programs or quality enhancements to existing services
- Jointly review the identified needs and prioritize them based on what research indicates is most likely to have the greatest effect on children's healthy development and readiness to succeed in school
- Develop goals for new, expanded and/or enhanced services that meet community needs but do not duplicate existing services
- Develop strategies or activities for achieving these goals, including details about what services will be provided, by whom, to whom, and by when
- Determine criteria to measure success



VII. GRANT GUIDELINES

Research has identified a framework of best practices for quality in early childhood settings. This research demonstrates that children who participate in settings incorporating such practices are significantly more likely to experience success in school and later in life. Despite the diversity among birth to three programs, there are ten best practices that apply to all quality early childhood programs and service systems. It is expected that applicants will build these best practice guidelines into the Endowment application.

- Whole child approach – any program for infants and toddlers must address all domains of early development including physical, social, emotional and cognitive development
- Inclusion of parents/other family members – because of the profound influence of parents and other family members, services must be focused on both the child and the parents and other family members
- Staff knowledge of very young children – birth to three services must be provided by staff who are knowledgeable about infant and toddler development and who are experienced in working with children this age and their families
- Staff/child or family ratios – staff must have reasonable caseloads or class sizes to devote adequate time to planning and building strong relationships with children and families
- Staff supervision and training – staff must be provided adequate supervision and on-going training in the field of infant and toddler development
- Periodic ongoing assessments – because infancy and childhood are times of such rapid growth and development, timely screening and ongoing assessments must be provided to ensure that children and families are receiving appropriate services
- Continuity of care – transitions between care settings and caregivers should be minimized since very young children are just developing their sense of trust. To the extent possible, infants and toddlers should be cared for in the same setting and with the same caregivers throughout their first three years



- Transition planning – transitions (e.g., beginning center-based care, moving from one classroom to another, moving on to a preschool program) must be carefully planned to ensure continuity of services for the child and family and to respect and protect the child’s emerging sense of trust
- Multidisciplinary coordination – services and assessments must be provided in a coordinated fashion
- Intensity of services – services must meet the complex needs of families who are facing multiple risk factors and challenges and be provided with increasing or decreasing intensity and duration as appropriate to meet the changing needs of families

There are approximately 24,500 children under the age of three in Nebraska who are at risk of school failure by virtue of the four risk factors defined in the legislation that provided the basis for this program. For these children, research supports that quality early childhood programs can allow children to make significant gains necessary to help prepare them to succeed in school.

Eligible applicants and their partners may apply to implement new high quality early care and education programs where none exist or to build on existing programs and services in the community. The Endowment Grant dollars are intended to improve access to high quality services for infants and toddlers who are most at risk by improving the quality of existing programs and increasing the availability of high quality services. Based on demonstrated community needs, services may be delivered in a variety of ways; i.e., through individualized family engagement programs, to groups of children in center-based or family childcare homes or a combination of these.



Grant dollars must not supplant existing state or federal funding for programs and services to infants and toddlers. If an eligible child is participating in an Early Head Start/Head Start program, that child cannot be identified to receive services under endowment funding unless a formal partnership with Early Head Start / Head Start results in serving more children or providing additional hours of service (i.e., an expanded day or calendar year). Similarly, if a child is currently receiving early childhood care and education services through Nebraska's Child Care Subsidy Program, that child can only receive services under this funding to the extent that the quality of care and comprehensiveness of services offered are increased.

VIII. TYPES OF GRANTS

Attachments A and B are supporting documents to this RFP and are designed to ensure that attention to program quality is built into the foundation of the Endowment Grants. Please refer to Attachments A and B for indicators of quality and the required program criteria for applicants.

There are three types of Endowment grants: 1) Continuation; 2) Quality Enhancement and 3) Access Expansion.

Continuation Grants

School districts that currently have Endowment grants will be considered continuation grantees and do not need to submit a grant application. An updated progress report should be submitted in the event there have been any updates since your January report.

Quality Enhancement Grants

To apply for a Quality Enhancement Grant, the partners must at least meet the minimum criteria in Column 1, Attachment A or B, to submit an application. The funds from a Quality Enhancement Grant are intended to assist the partners reach the criteria in Column 2. A school district may apply by partnering with existing programs, either center-based (Attachment A) or family engagement (Attachment B), that seek to provide higher quality services to children and families already receiving services.



Attachment A – for partnerships that include early care and education programs, the partnership must describe in detail how the program(s) plan(s) to achieve the staff/child ratios and group size criteria in Column 2 within one year and the remaining criteria within three years. (Note: in the case of staff qualifications, partnerships may be granted an extended timeline for all teachers pursuing a bachelor’s degree if it is determined that existing staff are making progress toward this goal but need additional time. The grant application should include an expected timeline for completion toward the Bachelor’s degree.) After the initial three-year grant and upon meeting all the quality standards in Column 2, applicants may apply for continuation funds for Access Expansion.

Attachment B – for partnerships that include existing family engagement programs, the partnership must describe in detail how the program(s) plan(s) to achieve the quality criteria in Column 2 within three years. (Note: in the case of staff qualifications, partnerships may be granted an extended timeline for all Family Educators/Home Visitors pursuing a bachelor’s degree if it is determined that existing staff are making progress toward this goal but need additional time. The grant application should include an expected timeline for completion toward the bachelor’s degree.) After the initial three-year grant and upon meeting all the quality standards in Column 2, applicants may apply for continuation funds for Access Expansion.

Programs that already meet the quality criteria in Column 2 of either Attachment A or B may apply for a Quality Enhancement Grant to offer a new service component that will enhance the overall quality and/or comprehensiveness of the services they provide to children and families.

Access Expansion Grants

Applicants who are beginning a new program or are partnering with an existing program(s) to expand access must meet the quality criteria in Column 2 of either Attachment A or B from the beginning of the grant period.



Eligible applicants may apply to expand access to birth to three services to accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Start a new program
2. Increase the numbers of children who are most at risk and already being served by existing program(s)
3. Expand existing part-day program(s) to full-day and/or full-year, based on documented evidence of families' needs for full-day, full-year care
4. Offer a new service component that will serve additional numbers of children who are most at risk. This new service may also enhance the comprehensiveness of existing services being provided to children and families already being served but it should be offered for additional numbers of children as well. If an applicant chooses this option, both types of changes should be carefully documented in the application.

IX. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Board of Trustees will contract with an external evaluator to conduct evaluation of all endowment programs in order to demonstrate a statewide impact. Applicants applying for funding must agree to participate in the evaluation.

In addition, programs funded through the Endowment are expected to conduct an annual self-assessment that reviews both the quality of program implementation and the progress that children and families are making as they participate in the program. The information from this self-assessment must be used in the program's continuous improvement plan. Programs should propose how they would conduct this self-assessment, although it is possible that, if funded, the program will be asked to work cooperatively with other sites in a cross-site evaluation and to use some common, cross-site assessments.



X. FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Initial Endowment Grants will be for a period of three years. Applicants should submit a detailed budget for Year 1 along with a projected budget and narrative for Years 2 and 3. In collaboration with community partners, proposals must include local matching funds which are equal to, or greater than, the amount requested. Specifically, programs that are applying for a Quality Enhancement Grant may use existing funding as part of the local match. Programs that are applying for an Access Expansion Grant may use funding for children who are currently in programs as part of their local match for an Endowment Grant, to add additional spaces for new children or additional services for families, or to expand part-day programs to full-day and/or full year.

Applications for Endowment funds may be for \$75,000-\$150,000 per year and must be matched at the local level with at least the same amount. (Example: If an applicant requests \$100,000 from an Endowment grant, we will expect to see a three-year budget based on the cost of \$200,000 per year.) Supplemental start-up costs for Year 1 may be requested for up to \$25,000 and are not required to be matched. The start-up funds are in addition to any grant funds requested. Continuation grants are not eligible for start-up funds.

Grantees will be expected to submit six-month and twelve-month reports detailing grant progress and will be eligible for continuation funds subject to availability and the submission of a continuation plan that meets the requirements of the Trustees. Applications will be funded in both urban and rural areas across the state to the fullest extent possible.

Operating funds may not be used for indirect costs which exceed the district's established rate, capital improvements, and/or purchase of buildings, land or vehicles. Further information about allowable costs of various funding sources can be found in the list of resources.



XI. APPLICATION TIMELINE

Application Available	December 12, 2008
Bidder's Videoconference (mandatory participation by one member of the partnership)	January 9, 2009
Letters of Intent Due	January 15, 2009
Technical Assistance Community Forums	February-March 2009
Applications Due	April 15, 2009
Notification Due	June 15, 2009
Grant Term Begins	July 1, 2009

XII. APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

1. Grant applications are available on December 12, 2008 via the Endowment website at www.earlychildhoodendowment.org. Applications must be submitted electronically to the Endowment website by 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, April 15, 2009. Upon submission of your application, you will receive a confirmation via e-mail that your proposal has been received. If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt by April 20, 2009, please contact Kathleen Feller at kfeller@nebraskachildren.org or at 402-817-2018. Applications that do not contain all required information will be returned and will not be considered unless a completed application is resubmitted prior to the deadline. Scanned signatures are acceptable.
2. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of persons knowledgeable in early childhood care and education.
3. Recommendations from the external panel will be provided to the Endowment Board of Trustees for approval and ultimate selection.



4. Funds for approved projects will be available July 1, 2009. New grantees will have until September 1, 2009 to begin grant activities. All expenditures for Year 1 must be completed prior to June 30, 2010. Funds will be allocated on an annual basis contingent on performance.

5. The Endowment Trustees reserve the right not to award any grants

XIII. CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

Further details regarding what to include in the proposal are provided in the Grant Application Instructions. The following are the criteria that will be used to score Grant proposals:

- A) Needs Assessment & Program Planning (Maximum 10 points)
 - 1) *Geographic Area to be Served*: The extent to which the applicant clearly identifies the geographic area to be served, including the boundaries of the service area.
 - 2) *Community Characteristics*: The extent to which the applicant clearly indicates that a significant number of children birth to three who are most at risk are currently unserved or underserved in the community.
 - 3) *Current Status*: The extent to which the applicant describes the community's current opportunities for children birth to age three and their families within the proposed service area, including the nature of program(s), number of children served, whether the programs are part-day or full-day, and any relevant indicators of the programs' current level of quality. Services must be provided year round. If an application includes center-based programs, they must be full-day services or the applicant must demonstrate why full-day services are not necessary in the geographic area that is being served.
 - 4) *Need and Justification for Chosen Approach*: The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the community's unmet needs for programs and/or services for children birth to age three and their families and any current barriers to the provision of services. The extent to which the applicant describes how the approach chosen will best meet the needs of very young



children and their families within the community and justifies the program approach for the population.

B) Community Partnerships and Organizational Capacity (Maximum 20 points)

- 1) *Partnerships*: The extent to which the applicant identifies the grant partners and describes the participation of each in the planning of the application. The extent to which all relevant partners have been involved in the planning process and will be involved in the implementation of the grant. The extent to which the applicant describes the plan for development of formal written agreements among partners and provides a clear plan for managing the program, including how the partners will work together to make key decisions, and the process by which potential disputes among partners will be resolved.
- 2) *Advisory Committee*: The extent to which the applicant describes the local early childhood advisory committee, including the current and proposed future members, and indicates how the committee will ensure appropriate representation of all community stakeholders, including but not limited to existing child care centers, family child care providers, preschools, Early Head Start/Head Start programs, providers of early intervention and early childhood special education services, resource and referral agencies, parents, and health and social service personnel. The extent to which the applicant indicates which partner will be responsible for convening and communicating with the Advisory Committee. The extent to which any local Early Head Start providers have been represented on the local early childhood advisory committee. The extent to which the members of the local early childhood advisory committee have been involved in the planning for the application.



- 3) *Organizational Capacity of Partners*: The extent to which the applicant describes: each partner's experience providing early care and education services, especially to infants, toddlers and their families; each partner's competence in working with families similar (in ethnicity, culture, language, and level of need) to those being served by the proposed program; and each partner's experience in managing grant-funded programs similar to the Endowment Grants. In addition:
- a. For School Districts that currently operate an Early Childhood Education program, the extent to which the program is in full compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations.
 - b. For Head Start/Early Head Start providers, the extent to which they are in compliance in all areas of their most recent monitoring review. If center-based, they must meet the criteria in subsection c, and if home-based, they must meet the criteria in subsection d.
 - c. For center-based early care and education providers, the extent to which the applicant clearly indicates how the provider's current program(s) meet(s) the Quality Criteria in Column 1 (for Quality Enhancement Grants) and/or Column 2 (for Access Expansion Grants) of Attachment A. The extent to which the applicant provides evidence that the center(s) license(s) is (are) in good standing by attaching a copy of their valid license(s) to the application and indicates whether the program has achieved any accreditation or other recognition of quality services.
 - d. For community-based organizations currently providing Family Engagement services, the extent to which the provider's current program meets the Quality Criteria in Column 1 (for Quality Enhancement Grants) and/or Column 2 (for Access Expansion Grants) of Attachment B. The extent to which the applicant indicates whether the program has achieved any accreditation, certification or other recognition of quality services.



C) Program Approach (Maximum 45 points)

1) *Goals and Objectives of the Proposed Program*: The extent to which the applicant defines the goals and specific measurable objectives of the proposed program, and describes how implementing the proposed program and achieving the goals and objectives will fulfill the purpose of the Endowment Grants.

2) *Program Design*: The extent to which the applicant identifies the elements of the program and/or services to be provided to children birth to age three and their families. For child care programs, the extent to which the applicant indicates the hours per day and number of days per year that service will be provided. For family engagement programs, the extent to which the applicant indicates the number of group and individual contacts with each family that will occur each month, and an approximation of hours of contact with families per month.

Specifically:

a. For programs applying for a Quality Enhancement Grant: The extent to which the applicant clearly identifies how Endowment Grant funds will be used to enhance program quality, including identifying which quality criteria in Column 2 of Attachment A will be implemented within the first year of the Endowment Grant period (e.g., staff ratios and group size), and providing a timeline for implementation within three years of all other required quality criteria. If applicable, the extent to which the applicant describes any extended timelines that are expected to be needed for meeting the staff qualification requirements.

b. For programs applying for an Access Expansion Grant: The extent to which the applicant describes how the program meets all of the quality criteria in Column 2 of Attachments A and B. The extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed program will result in children and families having greater access to quality care and education (e.g., an increase in the number of children served and/or the intensity of services provided)



- 3) *Curriculum Framework*: The extent to which the applicant identifies the project's curriculum framework and describes how the selected curriculum is evidence-based and provides a learning environment which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials. The extent to which the applicant describes how implementing the curriculum will support children's progress toward each domain of the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3 (Social & Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Health & Physical Development, Language & Literacy Development, Mathematics, Science, and Creative Arts). For programs including Family Engagement services: the extent to which the applicant identifies the curriculum that will be used to guide family engagement activities and personal visits, and describes how it is evidence-based.

- 4) *Child Screening and Assessment*: The extent to which the applicant describes how every participating child will be screened for possible developmental delays or disability within 45 days of entering the program and at least every six months through age three; identifies the evidence-based tool to be used; indicates who will be responsible for completing the screenings; provides assurances that written permission from a parent or guardian will be obtained prior to any screenings. The extent to which the applicant describes how children suspected of having a developmental delay or disability, either based on screening results or parent or staff concern, will be referred to Nebraska's Early Development Network <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/edn/>.

The extent to which the applicant identifies the measure(s) to be used to assess outcomes and describes how the results from the assessment will be used to inform the development of individualized learning plans. All Endowment Grant Programs are required to join the NDE subscription to report child assessment data for Results Matter http://ectc.nde.ne.gov/special_projects/results_matter/results_matter.htm



For family engagement services, the extent to which the applicant indicates what kind of parent and/or child assessments will be used as related to the objectives of the services.

The extent to which the applicant provides assurances that the school district of residence will assign a NDE Student Identifier, through the Nebraska Staff and Student Records System (NSSRS), to all children birth to age three in any early childhood care and education program that receives Endowment Grant funds.

- 5) *Transition Planning*: The extent to which the applicant describes the transition process to be implemented to place three-year-old children in other early childhood care and education programs after leaving the Endowment Grants program. The extent to which the applicant describes how parents and the receiving program will be involved in planning for and implementing a smooth transition for the child.
- 6) *Comprehensive Approach*: The extent to which the applicant describes how the program will, either directly or through partnerships with other community organizations, address children's needs regarding their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development and the specific needs of the family for other services.

For programs including Family Engagement services, the extent to which the applicant describes the process that will be used to develop family partnership agreements with each family, including: how parents and families will be involved in making decisions regarding the goals and outcomes of their family partnership agreement, and how the family partnership agreement will be used to guide services for the family.



- 7) *Staffing and Organizational Structure*: The extent to which the applicant: provides position descriptions that clearly describe the qualifications, any specialized skills, and duties for each position necessary for quality implementation of the proposed program; describes how the partners will recruit appropriate staff and assure that all staff meet the quality criteria of this RFP, includes the name, position and a brief resume for each key staff member that has been identified for the program; describes the governance structure, including identifying who will responsible for supervising and evaluating staff in the program; provides an organizational chart for the program; and describes how the results of staff evaluation will influence individual staff professional development plans.

- 8) *Professional Development*: The extent to which the applicant: describes how individual and program needs for professional development will be determined; describes an appropriate plan for providing staff the training needed to implement the selected curriculum framework and child screening and assessment tools; identifies the training resources available within the partnership and the timeline for providing the training; and describes how the early childhood care and education program will coordinate with the area Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership/Regional Training Coalition to provide professional development opportunities.

- 9) *Evaluation and Continuous Program Improvement*: The extent to which the applicant: describes the process to be used to determine whether progress is being made toward achieving the proposed goals and objectives of the grant proposal; the extent to which the applicant provides assurances that the partners will participate in program evaluation and monitoring efforts initiated by the Trustees, and describes how the information gathered will be used to inform continuous program improvement, including how and when the program partners and/or Advisory Committee will review program data to determine any necessary modifications to the program's approach or implementation.



10) *Implementation Plan*: The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the anticipated activities and timeline for planning and implementing the program and/or service in the community, and indicates the person and/or organization that will be responsible for each activity and the extent to which the applicant identifies how fidelity to the program approach selected will be established and/or maintained.

D) Recruitment, Eligibility, and Participant Selection (Maximum 10 points)

The extent to which the applicant describes: how children who are most at risk and their families will be recruited to participate in the program; how eligibility for the program will be determined; how information will be collected, what criteria will be used to determine eligibility, and how participants will be selected in the event there are more children and families who are found eligible for the program but can not be served.

E) Combination of Funding Sources and Budget Narrative (Maximum 15 points)

Applicants are required to prepare a budget with two sections, one for start-up costs and one for ongoing operating costs. For the start-up budget, a maximum of \$25,000 may be requested, and no match is required. For the operating budget, matching resources must be equal to or greater than the Grant funds awarded.

1) Section 1: Start-up Budget and Budget Narrative

- a) *Budget*: The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the funds requested for the Start-up Budget are necessary and sufficient to implement the quality enhancement or access expansion grant. A start-up budget form is included as a separate document.



b) *Budget Narrative*: The extent to which the applicant's narrative relates directly to the start-up budget identified in the proposal and should provide a rationale for the projected costs. Start-up funds may be used for salaries, professional development, facilitation of community partnerships, materials and supplies, equipment, and minor facility modifications. Justification must be provided for any single item over \$1,000.

2) Section 2: Operating Budget and Budget Narrative

a) *Budget*: The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the funds requested for the Operating Budget are necessary and sufficient to operate the proposed quality enhancements or expansion of services. The extent to which the budget relates directly to the activities and staff identified in the proposal, and includes only allowable costs. (Note: Non-allowable expenditures include indirect costs which exceed the district established rate, capital improvements, and purchase of buildings, land, or vehicles.) The extent to which the budget summary form clearly identifies the portions to be supported through Endowment Grant funds as well as funding for services provided by the applicant and/or partner agencies. An operating budget summary form is included in the application package.

b) *Budget Narrative*: The extent to which the applicant's budget narrative relates directly to the activities and staff identified in the proposal and provides a rationale for the projected costs (e.g., how employee benefits are derived). Justification must be provided for any single item over \$1,000.



The extent to which the applicant describes a plan to coordinate and use a combination of funding sources to maximize the number of children served and the intensity of services provided, and provides letters of commitment from the local public and private organizations/agencies and any other source that will be contributing toward the required local match of program costs.

DEFINITIONS

Child Care Center – a facility licensed to provide child care for 13 or more children.

Child Development Associate (CDA) – CDA means an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment and has been awarded the CDA Credential. Students develop a foundation in the theory and practice of effective childcare, with coursework in child growth and development, child psychology, methods of early childhood education, infant and toddler care, children with special needs, health, safety and nutrition, and child communication skills. Many students use the associate degree as preparation for a bachelor degree in the field, which in turn opens up a wider range of teaching roles and higher earning potential.

Comprehensive Services – means the services available in addition to the developmentally-appropriate learning component of the early childhood care and education program including, but not limited to, family development, involvement and support and access to nutritional, medical, dental, social and mental health services.

Developmentally Appropriate – means that the learning environment and teaching strategies are based on widely accepted theories and research about the typical and atypical growth, development and learning of children.

Family Child Care Home I – a child care operation in the provider's place of residence which is licensed to serve at least four but not more than eight children at any one time. A Family Child Care Home I provider may be approved to serve no more than two additional school-age children during non-school hours.



Family Child Care Home II – a child care operation either in the provider’s place of residence or a site other than the residence, licensed to serve twelve or fewer children at any one time.

Family Development and Support – means those components of an early childhood care and education program which recognize the central role of parents in their children’s development, with the goal of helping to create productive members of society. Family development and support components enhance parenting skills and the family’s ability to gain access to and benefit from community resources.

Family Engagement Services – family educators/home visitors work with parents and other significant persons (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends) who may or may not be part of the household to enhance skills and confidence in promoting understanding and demonstration of skills and knowledge in healthy child development, strengthens the parent-child relationship, and supports parents as children’s first teachers and caregivers.

Participation and Inclusion – participation of children and parents in any program shall be voluntary. Programs shall include children verified as having disabilities pursuant to 92 NAC 51. Programs shall integrate children of diverse social and economic characteristics.

RESOURCES

For information on Administration and Funding, Partnerships, Curriculum, Assessment & Program Evaluation, and Professional Development, click on <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ech/Resources.html>

Nebraska Department of Education’s home page <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ECH/ECH.html>