

# Child Care Partnerships

## Growing local networks of early childhood professionals



A large proportion of Nebraska's 30,000 most vulnerable infants and toddlers spend many hours each day in the care of someone other than their parents or immediate family.

It is critical these providers deliver the kinds of interactions and experiences that advance healthy brain development and skill formation during children's first three years of life.

Sixpence's Child Care Partnerships leverage existing state systems, community resources and local expertise to ensure more infants and toddlers at risk are in the care of providers who meet high standards of quality, professionalism and accountability.

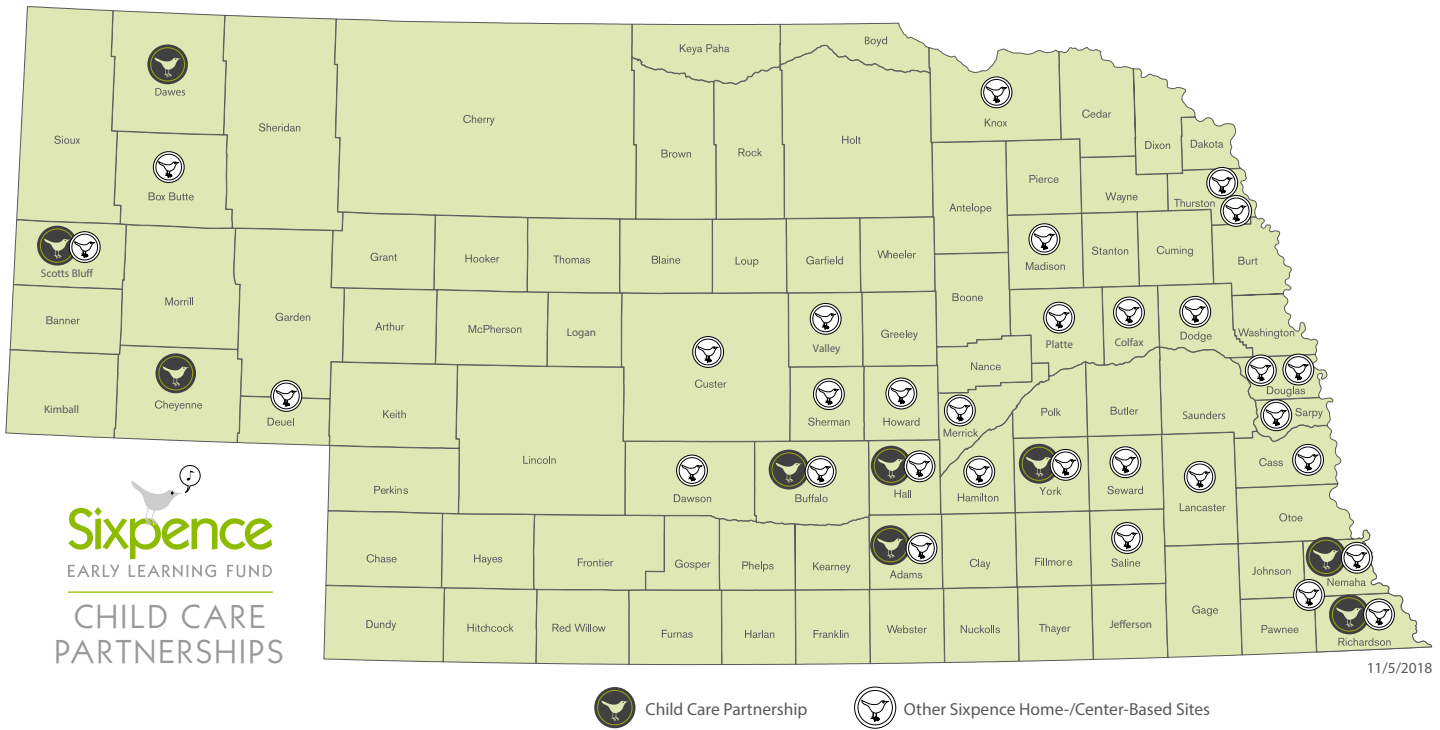
Many hard-working Nebraska families rely upon home- and center-based child care at precisely the time when early care and learning experiences can have a profound effect on children's healthy development.

It is critical that early care providers meet the quality standards known to promote the assets of cognition, character and behavior that inform kindergarten readiness and prospects for lifelong success. This is particularly important for infants and toddlers most at risk of falling developmentally behind their peers even before they arrive at school.

In 2015, state lawmakers make it possible for partnerships between local school districts and child care providers to meet the statutory requirements for the use of Sixpence funds and quality improvement supports. This enables a growing number of providers statewide to rise to the standards of effectiveness, professionalism and accountability we ought to expect for our public and private investments in the next generation of young Nebraskans.

### Why Sixpence Child Care Partnerships make good sense

- **Maximizing Existing Local Resources:** Nebraska's school districts play an important role in helping parents support their children's early development. But because district resources are expected to stretch farther than ever before, schools cannot do this alone. Local child cares offer a source of existing facilities and professional talent to help communities address their early care and education needs. Sixpence's new partnership model enables these providers to deliver full-day, year-round services at the same level of quality offered by school-based programs.
- **Cultivating a Skilled Early Childhood Workforce:** Throughout Nebraska, there are insufficient numbers of skilled professionals to meet the growing demand for high-quality early care and learning programs. Sixpence Child Care Partnerships connect local providers to professional development resources and individualized support from technical specialists. This helps grow an informed, highly-skilled workforce of early childhood educators and program administrators—a crucial component of Nebraska's statewide talent pool.
- **Ensuring Accountability for Public Dollars:** Like all Sixpence-funded programs, the new Child Care Partnerships participate in rigorous quality evaluations by independent researchers at Munroe-Meyer Institute, UNMC. In addition, participating providers are required to enroll in *Step Up to Quality*, Nebraska's child care rating and improvement system. Together, these offer professional development supports as well as an accountability system that ensures Nebraska's child care subsidy and other public dollars purchase the kinds of high-quality services known to prepare children for lifelong success.



**9 Child Care Partnerships Statewide as of 2019:** Of the 11 communities who participated in the 2016 competitive grant process, 9 partnerships are now being actively funded through Sixpence. These collaborations between school districts and local providers are strategically located in areas of the state where an enhanced infrastructure is needed to address significant concentrations of infants and toddlers at risk.

- Auburn Public Schools
- Gering Public Schools
- Kearney Public Schools
- Chadron Public Schools
- Grand Island Public Schools
- Sidney Public Schools
- Falls City Public Schools
- Hastings Public Schools
- York Public Schools

*Indicates Panhandle Sixpence Consortium locations serving multiple communities through three regional hubs*