

# Sixpence



## Quality, Community & Family: Why Sixpence Works

For nearly fourteen years, the Sixpence Early Learning Fund has shifted the odds of lifelong success in favor of a growing number of Nebraska's infants and toddlers at risk. An innovative collaboration between our state's public and private sectors, Sixpence provides funding and enhances the quality and efficiency of early learning and development services offered in communities throughout Nebraska. Sixpence demonstrates how targeted investments in the school-readiness of our youngest, most vulnerable children are also investments that strengthen our families, communities and state.

### Sixpence promotes quality and accountability

Sixpence invests in programs built on practices proven to support the development of cognition and character in young children. Sixpence programs demonstrate strong administrative practices and are staffed by knowledgeable, highly skilled educators who are provided with opportunities for ongoing professional development. Regular assessments enable Sixpence staff to deliver highly specialized assistance to funded programs, helping them grow in quality and achieve better outcomes for the children they serve.

### Sixpence is about meeting local needs

Each Sixpence-funded program represents a community partnership between local school districts, service providers and other area agencies and stakeholders. This community-oriented focus enables each Sixpence program to be highly responsive to the unique needs of the children and families it serves and leverage local resources more efficiently.

### Sixpence helps build stronger families

Parents play the most important role in the care and education of young children. Sixpence-funded programs work directly with parents, enabling them to better understand and address their children's earliest developmental needs. Independent evaluations of Sixpence programs show these efforts result in stronger parent-child interactions known to support children's social and emotional competency.



More than 30,000 of Nebraska's infants and toddlers begin their lives facing challenges that are known to inhibit the growth of a strong, neurological foundation for lifelong success.

Stimulating, nurturing early experiences are crucial if these children are to stay ahead of an achievement gap that widens rapidly well before they arrive at kindergarten.

Sixpence is changing the outlook for a growing number of Nebraska's most vulnerable infants and toddlers. In fact, 94% of children served by Sixpence-funded programs are developmentally on track with their more advantaged peers.

That's the kind of success  
Nebraska can build on.



*Sixpence funds 35 grantees statewide representing family engagement (home visiting) programs, center-based programs, combined home/center-based programs and community child care partnerships. For more information about the grant program, visit [SingASongofSixpence.org](http://SingASongofSixpence.org).*

### Where Sixpence Began

In 2006, the Nebraska Legislature stepped up to the challenge of ensuring that more of Nebraska’s youngest, most vulnerable children would arrive at school ready to learn by establishing the Nebraska Early Childhood Education Endowment Grant Program. The Endowment was built upon an innovative system of matching public-private investments that enabled each \$1 in private contributions to ultimately yield \$6 in blended funds—hence the name *Sixpence*, from the beloved nursery rhyme.

### How Sixpence Works

The combined public and private earnings of the Endowment, supplemented by existing state and federal resources, provide funding for high-quality early care and learning services throughout Nebraska. The public and private representatives who comprise the Sixpence Board of Trustees oversee a competitive grant process open to community partnerships between local school districts and a variety of other agencies, organizations and service providers. Nebraska Children and Families Foundation administers the grants and provides individualized guidance to grantees, enabling them to consistently meet the quality standards Sixpence requires. Sixpence programs regularly undergo a rigorous evaluation process by researchers at Munroe-Meyer Institute (UNMC) to measure child outcomes and ensure ongoing accountability for Nebraska’s public-private investment.

### How Sixpence is Growing

Encouraged by children’s developmental outcomes and the grant program’s ongoing commitment to quality and fiscal accountability, Nebraska legislators increased Sixpence investments in 2013, 2015, 2021 to reach more of the state’s infants and toddlers at risk. Since 2008, Sixpence grants have been awarded to community partnerships led by school districts to provide a variety of home- and center- based family engagement and early care services. In 2015, state policymakers approved legislation that made it possible for community childcare providers to meet the statutory requirements for Sixpence funding by entering into partnerships with school districts. The Sixpence Childcare Partnership Grants also connect childcare partners to an additional range of professional development resources and quality improvement supports through Nebraska’s *Step Up to Quality* childcare rating and improvement system.

As of April 2022, Sixpence funds high-quality early childhood services reaching approximately 1,600 infants and toddlers in 43 Nebraska communities statewide.