

# Sixpence



## Quality, accountability, and family focus

The Sixpence Early Learning Fund is Nebraska's signature approach to closing the achievement gap **before** kindergarten by targeting our state's youngest, most at-risk children and preparing them to arrive at school ready for success.

An innovative partnership between our state's public and private sectors, Sixpence provides funding and enhances the quality of early childhood services in communities throughout the state, and helps maximize the resources we dedicate to preparing the next generation of Nebraskans to thrive as students and citizens.



### Sixpence is about high-quality standards

Sixpence offers high-quality early learning environments for infants and toddlers, and helps families understand the benefits of healthy interactions with their children. Each program is built upon instructional and administrative practices proven to advance the healthy development of young children. Sixpence is staffed by highly qualified educators who are provided with regular opportunities to improve their professional caliber through ongoing training.



### Sixpence is about meeting local needs

Each Sixpence 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 children and families it serves, and leverage local resources more efficiently.



### Sixpence is about strengthening families

Parents are the most pivotal figures in young children's growth of cognition and character. Sixpence programs work directly with parents to help them rise to that responsibility, enabling them to better understand and meet their children's earliest developmental needs. Rigorous assessments by independent evaluators confirm that these efforts result in stronger parent-child interactions, and skill gains that persist well into the K-12 system.

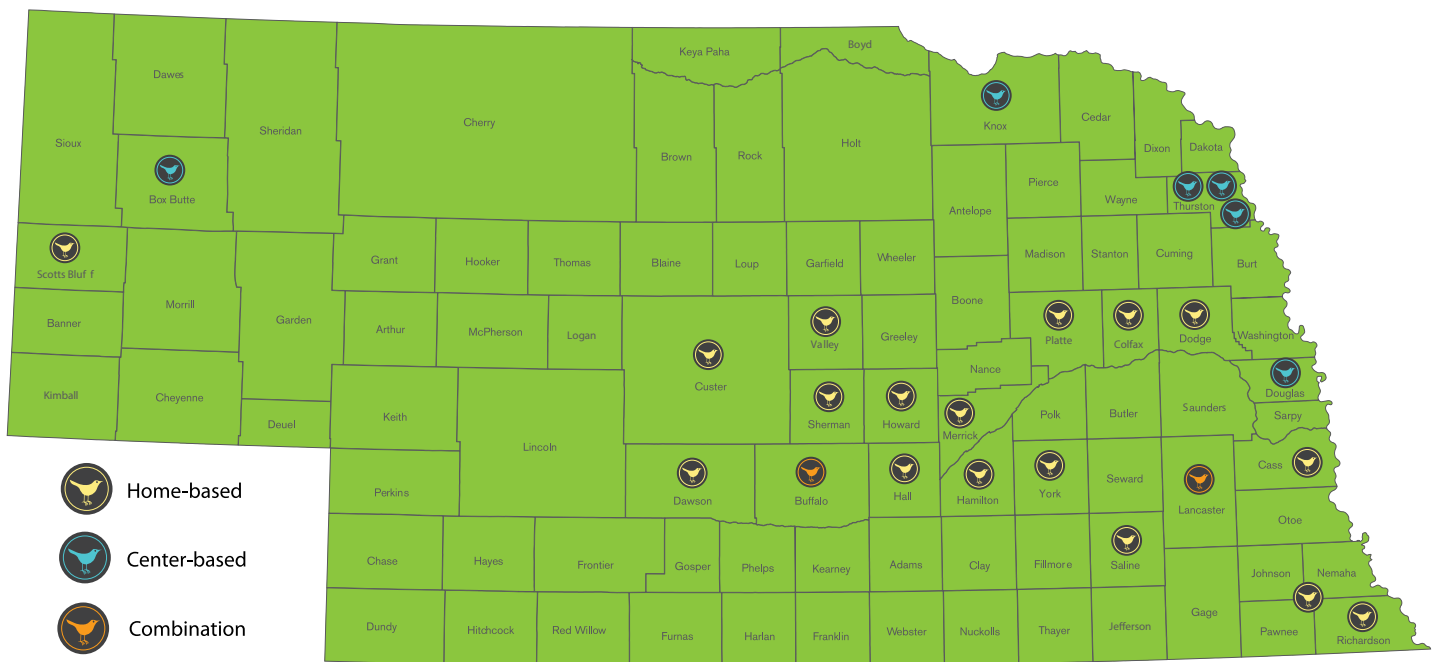


Neuroscience clearly shows that stimulating, nurturing relationships, environments and interactions in the first three years are crucial to a child's preparedness to thrive in school and life.

And yet, approximately 32,753 infants and toddlers in Nebraska—about one half of all children under age 3—face risk factors that often deny them the benefit of these early experiences.

Instead of starting on the road to lifelong success, far too many of these children end up on the wrong side of an achievement gap that will only widen rapidly as they grow older.

Sixpence is working with families in communities across the state to change that.



*Sixpence currently serves 25 grantees representing Family Engagement (Home-Based) programs (17 grantees), Center-Based programs (6 grantees), and both types of service models (2 grantees). For more information about each grantee, visit [SingASongofSixpence.org/locations/](http://SingASongofSixpence.org/locations/).*

## Sixpence—How it Works

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 private contribution to ultimately yield \$6 in blended funds—hence the name *Sixpence*, from the beloved nursery rhyme. Earnings from the endowment are primarily granted to school districts and their community partners to provide high-quality center- and home-based programs for infants and toddlers most at risk of failure in school.

A Board of Trustees representing public and private interests approves Sixpence grants. Nebraska Children and Families Foundation administers the grants and provides technical assistance to grantees to enable them to consistently meet the high standards of quality Sixpence demands. 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.

Encouraged by the success of Sixpence in improving children’s preparedness to learn and achieve in Nebraska schools, the state legislature approved additional Sixpence investments in 2013. Sixpence has grown to serve infants and toddlers in 25 communities across the state through a mix of center-based and family-engagement (home-based) models.

“Sixpence hasn’t just taught my kids, it has taught me a world that I didn’t know existed. It’s helped me become a better parent and to teach them how to be confident and well adjusted.”

— Sixpence Parent



[SingASongofSixpence.org](http://SingASongofSixpence.org)  
 Amy Bornemeier  
[abornemeier@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:abornemeier@nebraskachildren.org)  
 402-817-2018