

# BUFFALO COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD



<https://bcchp.org/early-childhood-collaborative/>

## Buffalo County

Facilitating community conversations that make opportunities for young children to learn, grow, and develop in high quality, safe, and loving environments.

**Vision** is that all children and families in Buffalo County will have access to affordable quality care and education; families, caregivers and child care providers will be supported; and children will have the resources to develop and grow to their fullest potential.

## Community Partners

- 60+ Childcare Centers and Providers
- Buffalo County Commissioners
- Buffalo County Economic Development Council
- Buffalo County Schools
- Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska, Headstart
- Communities for Kids (C4K)
- Department of Health and Human Services, licensing
- Early Learning Connections
- Educational Unit Service 10
- Elm Creek Childcare Initiative
- Kearney Area Children's Museum
- Kearney Public Schools
- Livewell Counseling
- Medica Foundation
- Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
- Pleasanton C4K Core Team
- Rooted in Relationships
- Ravenna C4K Core Team
- Sixpence Child Care Programs
- University of Nebraska Kearney

*With more partners, too numerous to list, working collaboratively on this issue.*

## Community Challenges

*1 in 5 children* in Buffalo County can't access quality childcare, based on 2022 data.<sup>1</sup>



Nearly **70%** of Nebraska surveyed providers said they **accept childcare subsidy**.<sup>2</sup>

**31%** of Nebraska parents of children five and under said that they **left the workforce because they couldn't find affordable childcare**.<sup>3</sup>

Nationwide, children under the age of five are **expelled at more than 13 times the rate** of K-12 students **from private and community child care programs**.<sup>4</sup>

## Priority Work

Our community goal is to create opportunities for young children to learn, grow, and develop in safe and loving environments.

- Engage and support parents and communities with early childhood resources, education, and trainings to ensure all children have strong social emotional development skills and access to quality childcare.
- Build capacity and improve quality by coordinating local community based efforts.
- Aligning with all early childhood initiatives and businesses to co-design and combine efforts.

# BUFFALO COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA



## Affordability of Quality Care

An individual must work

**70 hours**

a week in Buffalo County to afford a two bedroom home.<sup>5</sup>



26%

of household\* income in Buffalo County is spent on childcare<sup>6</sup>

\*average households in Buffalo County with two children, based on 2023 and 2022 data

74% of children under the age of six had all parents in workforce in 2022.<sup>7</sup>

74% of employers said lack of childcare or cost has affected hiring candidate choice in Buffalo County.<sup>8</sup>

Young children who are suspended or expelled from childcare/preschool are **10 times more likely to:**

- Drop out of high school
- Experience academic failure and grade retention
- Have negative feelings about school
- Face incarceration<sup>4</sup>

## Connect

👤 Tana Miller  
✉️ [tmiller@bcchp.org](mailto:tmiller@bcchp.org)  
☎️ (308) 865-2284

## Invest

👤 [bcchp.org/donate](https://bcchp.org/donate)  
👤 [bcchp.org/volunteer](https://bcchp.org/volunteer)

## Access To Quality Care

Quality Childcare Availability\* in Buffalo County, based on 2022 data<sup>9</sup>



Number of children under age 6 with all available parents working

**2,840**



Total number of licensed childcare spots

**— 1,851.75**

Total number of preschool spots

**— 354**



Number of children under age 6 not enrolled in a private licensed program or other preschool program

**= 634.25**

👉 Gap of available childcare options



## 126 new childcare spots

The Buffalo County Childcare Champion Program mentored 12 childcare providers to help them secure provisional licenses, resulting in the opening of **126 new childcare spots** while also enhancing the quality of **186 childcare spots** from 2022 to 2024.<sup>10</sup>



1. Communities for Kids, Buffalo County, NE, Community Conversations About Early Childhood Programs and Services

2. Nebraska Child Care Market Rate Survey Report 2023, page 26, Buffett Early Childhood Institute

3. We Care for Kids 2023 Statewide Survey

4. SRI Education, accessed from preventexpulsion.org

5. National Low Income Housing Coalition accessed from Casey Family Programs, NE Opportunity Map, 2019

6. Living Wage Institute, accessed from countyhealthrankings.org

7. ©Kids Count in Nebraska 2023 Report, page 56

8. Buffalo County Child Care Needs Assessment for Business Leaders, 2022

9. Communities for Kids, Buffalo County, NE, Community Conversations About Early Childhood Programs and Services

10. Local Communities for Kids data collected by Buffalo County Community Partners