



Lincoln



Omaha



Kearney



Medical Center

Q&A: The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska

How will Susie Buffett's gift be used?

Susie's gift will be more than matched by university, private and federal sources to leverage a much greater investment in Nebraska's youngest and most vulnerable children and families. In short, the gift will be used to establish and sustain a national-class, university-wide, multidisciplinary institute dedicated to improving the first eight years of life and learning. The institute could also serve as a model for how public, land-grant universities approach early childhood education in the 21st century.

In part, Susie's gift and the matching funds will support construction of several new Educare Centers throughout Nebraska modeled after the successful centers in Omaha and elsewhere across the country.

Additionally, the Buffett gift and the university's funds will be used to:

- Hire a nationally known executive director for the institute, as well as directors for research, education, and policy and outreach.
- Recruit and retain an outstanding faculty.
- Support new research and other scholarly studies to advance the early childhood field, in Nebraska and across the nation.
- Support a special scholarship fund to help early childhood educators increase their skill levels and knowledge.
- Support curriculum development and the development of online certification programs that reach more Nebraskans.
- Bolster policy and outreach efforts to boost the public's understanding of – and support for – early childhood.
- Create a national clearinghouse and media resource center and a new early childhood scholarly journal.

Where will the new Educare Centers be located?

The University of Nebraska has committed to raising private funds to match Buffett's gift to build up to three new Educare Centers throughout Nebraska. There are preliminary discussions about Lincoln being one site for a new center; other sites across the state are under consideration.

Where will the Institute be located?

The institute will be university-wide, involving faculty and academic centers from all four campuses. It has not yet been determined where the institute will be headquartered; this likely will be determined once an executive director is hired.

How will all four campuses be involved?

The four-campus NU system allows for considerable strength and diversity within the institute, much broader than any one campus could achieve alone. The strengths of all four campuses will be leveraged effectively through a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach – a model with which the university is well-accustomed. NU centers that will be involved in the institute include the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools; the Munroe-Meyer Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; UNMC’s College of Public Health; and the colleges of education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Numerous faculty across NU will be involved, from disciplines including child and family studies, educational psychology, nutrition, sociology, public health, communications, pediatrics, economics and architecture.

How will students benefit? Will there be new academic programs associated with the institute?

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute will help set the gold standard for the education of the next generation of early childhood practitioners. Students will learn from the best faculty and will have access to cutting-edge, research-backed curriculum, the latest data and teaching strategies, and on-site experience and internships in community early childhood centers. New programs related to early childhood education – including online courses – will be developed for undergraduates, graduate students and working professionals.

What is the leadership structure of the institute and how soon will an executive director be hired?

In partnership with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and others, the president of the university will appoint a national advisory board for the institute. An executive director will be appointed following a national search. There is a goal to appoint both the advisory board and executive director within a year of the institute’s establishment.

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