
EVALUATION NETWORK TEAM VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The ultimate purpose of the Evaluation Network Team (ENT) was to engage in reflection and problem solving to generate learning that drives systemic approaches to early childhood evaluation throughout Nebraska.

The ENT developed the following core tenants:

1. We lead with our values
2. We aim for simultaneous quality and equity
3. We use evaluation as a driver of simultaneous quality and equity
4. We recognize, engage with, and co-create with evaluation stakeholders to enhance quality and equity through evaluation

We Lead With our Values

The original Nebraska Early Child Values appeared in the Early Childhood Strategic Planning report in 2020. Beginning in November 2020, members of the ENT reviewed and revised the original value statements and created action statements in the form of principles. Values are qualities that we espouse and desire. Our values are equity, alignment, community voice, community investment, integration, and effectiveness. Principles are guidelines for action based on our values. We believe that principles will drive our actions as evaluators and evaluation stakeholders and subsequently yield simultaneous quality and equity for Nebraska's young children and their families.

ENT members consider our values and principles to be simultaneously aspirational and action-oriented. The detail provided in the value statements and principles clarifies our collective commitment to quality and equity. ENT members centered children and their families in the values and principles so that the definitions of equity, community voice, community investment, alignment, integration, and effectiveness revolve around the perspectives and experiences of young children and their families.

NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD VALUES

EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

EQUITY: We believe that every child in Nebraska should have access to quality ECCE, and that access and quality should not vary due to race, ethnicity, geographic location, ability status, home language, culture, participation in special education and/or mental health resources, or families' preferred hours, location, and types of care.

Evaluators work with stakeholders before evaluation begins to identify equity action agendas that reveal and address the individuals, perspectives, and dimensions of ECCE that have been frequently omitted, overlooked, or misunderstood in ways that constrain equity in program development, implementation, and evaluation.

Evaluators incorporate stakeholder input on equity action agendas throughout the evaluation process to address equity during the formation of evaluation questions, the choice of evaluation methods and instruments, and the interpretation and dissemination of evaluation findings.

ALIGNMENT: We believe that effective alignment among multiple systems and standards is required to support whole-child development (physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and academic) as well as to prepare families, professionals, and communities to enhance children's development.

Evaluators investigate how children's ECCE experiences are related to multiple systems - health, education, social service, and local agency systems.

Evaluators investigate how the interaction of ECCE with multi-system influences is related to whole-child development.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT: We believe that everyone in Nebraska benefits from positive and equitable development for all young children, and we believe that communities are actively invested in their children's development.

Evaluators investigate community models for ECCE investment and explore the rationales for and local and state correlates of community models.

Evaluators use methods that allow for studying variation of investments across communities as well as following change and improvement of investments within communities.

COMMUNITY VOICE: We believe that communities, and especially families and child and family service providers within communities, are the experts on how to meet the needs of their young children.

Evaluators engage with stakeholders before evaluation begins to identify local goals for incorporating community voice in the evaluation design and process.

Evaluators use methods to engage community voice that address known barriers to meaningful participation (such as time, compensation, access to information), while simultaneously investigating ongoing barriers to participation especially for families and providers throughout the evaluation process.

Evaluators engage with local stakeholders, especially those with lived experience of the ECCE system, to make sense of evaluation findings and incorporate community sense-making into final reports.

INTEGRATION: We believe that new initiatives to improve ECCE should harmonize with existing systems in ways that promote positive and equitable child development.

Evaluators define the benefits of integrating existing systems in terms of the outcomes experienced by children and their families.

Evaluators use methods that allow for identification of population and subgroup outcomes and experiences to trace equity in relation to systems integration.

EFFECTIVENESS: We believe that children and families will benefit when we work from clear understandings of effective programs and policies based on research, based on awareness of community values and capacities, and based on families' perceptions of value.

Evaluators use methods that generate sufficient information about ECCE research evidence, community values and capacities, and family perceptions of ECCE value.

Evaluators investigate the congruence of research evidence, community values and capacities, and family perceptions of quality and benefit related to Nebraska ECCE efforts.