

CATHERINE HUDDLESTON-CASAS, Ph.D.

Omaha, NE | 402.681.2734 | cathey@hcinsights.com | LinkedIn: catherine-huddleston-casas

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced researcher, policy strategist, and systems change leader with deep expertise in early care and education workforce development. Known for building trusted relationships across sectors, facilitating complex coalitions, and translating research into actionable policy solutions. Committed to ecological systems approaches that create sustainable change for children, families, and the professionals who serve them.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Early Care and Education Workforce Technical Assistance Specialist

Zero to Three | National Early Care and Education Workforce Center, Washington, DC

2025 – Present

- ▶ Provide intensive, individualized technical assistance to state leaders developing strategies to transform early care and education workforce policy systems
- ▶ Partner with state agencies to co-design cross-sector approaches to systems change, workforce sustainability, and equitable compensation

Senior Consultant

CHC Insights, Omaha, NE

2024 – Present

- ▶ Provide strategic consulting on early childhood workforce policy, funding analysis, and systems change to public and nonprofit sector clients

Assistant Director of Growth and Development

Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers, Omaha, NE

2024 – 2025

- ▶ Led organizational growth and development strategy for a statewide alliance serving child advocacy centers

Associate Director, Workforce Planning and Development

Buffett Early Childhood Institute, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE

2016 – 2024

- ▶ Led early childhood funding and financing strategy for the Institute, driving statewide systems change through research, coalition-building, and policy engagement
- ▶ Co-convened the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission — a 40+ member cross-sector coalition — and guided development of landmark workforce recommendations
- ▶ Developed Nebraska's interactive Early Childhood Funding Map, a first-of-its-kind data visualization tool increasing transparency in public early childhood investment
- ▶ Authored multiple technical reports tracking Nebraska's public investment in early childhood care and education (FY2017, FY2019, FY2021)
- ▶ Engaged directly with state legislative leadership including the Chair of the Appropriations Committee of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Doctor of Philosophy, Family Social Science

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

2002

Master of Science, Human Development and Family Studies

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

1995

Bachelor of Science, Psychology

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

1992

Professional Certifications & Training

- ▶ Core Coach Training, Wellcoaches Center of Coaching Excellence (2013)
- ▶ Institute for Healthcare Improvement Breakthrough Series College (2025)

SELECT PUBLICATIONS (2015–PRESENT)

Research Reports & Policy Briefs

- Gerson, C.S. & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2026). State Models for Financing ECE Educator Wage Scales. National Early Care and Education Workforce Center.
- Castle, S., Sheffler, K, Smith, S., Huddleston-Casas, C. & Lessard, L. (2026). Communities for Action Evaluation Report. National Early Care and Education Workforce Center.
- Lee, Y., Douglass, A., Beatty, L., Ku, D.H., Huddleston-Casas, C., Smith, S., Castle, S., & Lessard, L. (2026). Early Findings from Three States Working to Strengthen ECE Workforce Compensation: Action Research Partnership Case Study. National Early Care and Education Workforce Center.
- Sarver, S., Huddleston-Casas, C., & Charlet, C. (2024). Elevating Nebraska's Early Childhood Workforce: Four-Year Implementation Update. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. (2023). Gap Widens for Achieving Fully Funded Early Childhood System in Nebraska. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. & Goettemoeller Wendl, J. (2023). Nebraska's Public Investment in Early Childhood Care and Education, FY2021: Technical Report. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. & Goettemoeller Wendl, J. (2023). Nebraska's Public Investment in Early Childhood Care and Education, FY2019: Technical Report. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Sarver, S. & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2021). Using Short-term Investments to Leverage Long-term Sustainability: Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce with Federal Relief Funds. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Sarver, S.L., Huddleston-Casas, C., Charlet, C. & Wessels, R. (2020). Elevating Nebraska's Early Childhood Workforce: Report and Recommendations of the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. & Goettemoeller, J. (2020). Nebraska's Public Investment in Early Childhood Care and Education, FY2017: Technical Report. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

Refereed Journal Articles

- Zuckerman, S.J., Garrett, A.L., Sarver, S., & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2020). Playing well with others: A case study of collective impact in the early care and education policy arena. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 14(7), 1–23.
- Bice-Wigington, T., Simmons, L.A., & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2015). An ecological perspective on rural, low-income mothers' health. *Social Work in Public Health*, 30(2), 129–143.

Interactive Tool

- Huddleston-Casas, C. & Goettemoeller Wendl, J. (2023). Nebraska Early Childhood Funding Map [web tool]. Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

SELECT NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS (2015–PRESENT)

- Huddleston-Casas, C., Sarver, S., & Goettemoeller Wendl, J. (2024). What Do All Those Numbers Mean? Cost of Quality versus Quality-Oriented Cost-Based Approach. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center Workforce Convening, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. (2023). Mapping the Money: An Interactive Tool Showing the Complexity of Early Childhood Funding. T.E.A.C.H. Workforce Convening, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. (2023). Focus on Financing: Effective and Equitable Financing Strategies. NAEYC Online Public Policy Forum.
- Huddleston-Casas, C. & Sarver, S. (2022). Considerations for Developing an Early Childhood Pay Scale. T.E.A.C.H. Workforce Convening, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Sarver, S., Huddleston-Casas, C., Garrett, A., & Zuckerman, S. (2018). Documenting and Engaging a Multi-system Group to Transform the Early Childhood Workforce. NAEYC Professional Learning Institute, Austin, TX.

SELECT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (2015–PRESENT)

- ▶ Nebraska Early Childhood Cost Modeling Advisory Workgroup (2022–2024)
 - ▶ Nebraska Early Childhood Governance and Financing Task Force (2020–2024)
 - ▶ Nebraska Early Childhood Education Business Collaboratory Team (2021–2023)
 - ▶ Co-convener, Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission; Led Funding and Financing Workgroup (2016–2019)
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EARLIER CAREER (APPENDIX)

A complete record of academic publications, presentations, teaching, grant activities, and professional service prior to 2015 — including work as an Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2001–2015) and a Congressional Fellow in the U.S. Senate (1998–1999) — is provided in the attached appendix.

APPENDIX: EARLIER CAREER RECORD (PRE-2015)

This appendix documents Catherine's academic career and earlier professional work for positions or contexts that request a complete record.

EARLIER PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Associate Professor with Tenure, Child, Youth, and Family Studies

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2010 – 2015

Assistant Professor, Child, Youth, and Family Studies

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2001 – 2010

Research Coordinator

Health Partners Research Foundation, Minneapolis, MN

1999 – 2001

Congressional Fellow, Office of U.S. Senator Paul D. Wellstone (MN)

U.S. Senate, Washington, DC

1998 – 1999

Fellowship supported by the University of Minnesota Mary Ellen McFarland Fellowship (\$10,000)

TEACHING AWARD

University of Nebraska Office of the Vice Chancellor, College of Education and Human Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award (2007)

SELECT EARLIER PUBLICATIONS

Rural Poverty & Health

Bice-Wigington, T. & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2012). Influencing self-reported health among rural low-income women through health care and social service utilization. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 15(5), 417–434.

Simmons, L.A., Huddleston-Casas, C.A., et al. (2012). A mixed methods study of management of health conditions in rural low-income families. *Rural and Remote Health*, 12(2).

Huddleston-Casas, C., Charnigo, R., & Simmons, L.A. (2009). Food insecurity and maternal depression in rural, low-income families. *Public Health Nutrition*, 15, 1–8.

Simmons, L.A., Huddleston-Casas, C., & Berry, A. (2007). Low-income rural women and depression. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 31(6), 657–666.

Early Childhood

Torquati, J.C., Raikes, H.H., Huddleston-Casas, C.A., et al. (2011). Family income, parent education, and perceived constraints as predictors of program quality. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26(4), 453–464.

Torquati, J., Raikes, H.H., & Huddleston-Casas, C. (2007). Teacher education, motivation, compensation, workplace support, and links to quality. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(2), 261–275.

Methodology

Plano Clark, V., Huddleston-Casas, C., et al. (2008). Mixed methods approaches in family science research. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29(11), 1543–1566.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION CONTRIBUTIONS

- ▶ Children Who Witness Domestic Violence Act (S. 1321, 106th Congress, 1999–2000) — drafted during Congressional Fellowship
- ▶ No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), Subpart 17: Combatting Domestic Violence — contributed language that became Public Law

SELECT UNIVERSITY TEACHING

- ▶ Child and Family Policy
- ▶ Families in the Economy
- ▶ Limited Resource Families
- ▶ Introduction to Family Financial Management