



National Center for
Families Learning

IMPACT REPORT

2023



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Letter from our Board Chair and President & CEO

In 2023, NCFL's 60x30 vision took shape as partners across the country joined together with us to coordinate and align their existing efforts and ensure equitable access to learning and economic opportunities. We fully anticipate that realizing this vision will have powerful and positive impacts in communities across the country in the coming months and years.

We're so proud to have a number of early family learning communities in our home state of Kentucky, including Franklin County, Fayette County, and Jefferson County. The spread of our 60x30 Vision can also be seen further afield with early work happening in Georgia, Michigan, and Arizona. We look forward to collaborating in 2024 to create systems of support in these communities that will deepen the impact of their ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children and families.

NCFL continues to serve as a lead partner in Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) across the country. We're now in the second year of our efforts to build an SFEC in Colorado. Additionally, thanks to U.S. Department of Education grants secured in 2023, we'll be continuing our Nebraska SFEC for five more years and launching SFEC work in North Carolina alongside a suite of strong partners. Public funding like this is an important part of spreading, scaling, and sustaining our work.

In October of last year, we were so energized by the 2023 Families Learning Conference, which welcomed over 600 attendees to our first fully in-person convening since 2019. Both this event and our national webinar series provide powerful opportunities to network and share.

Strategic partnerships are also an important part of our efforts to expand our work, and throughout 2023 NCFL grew our partnership with the Adult Literacy and Learning Impact Network (ALL IN) and deepened our engagement with the members of our Family Learning Community Collaborative (FLCC) and with community-based organizations across the country. Additionally, a new equity-focused partnership with the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) will help us achieve our commitments to DEI across the southern region.

Our success in 2023 is first and foremost a testament to the commitment of our staff and to the strength and resilience of the children, families, and communities with whom it is our privilege to collaborate. We invite you to join us in 2024 as we work towards a family learning community network that recognizes these children and families as the foundation on which strong and equitable communities are built.

In partnership,



Felicia Cumings Smith, Ed.D
President & CEO

Felicia C. Smith

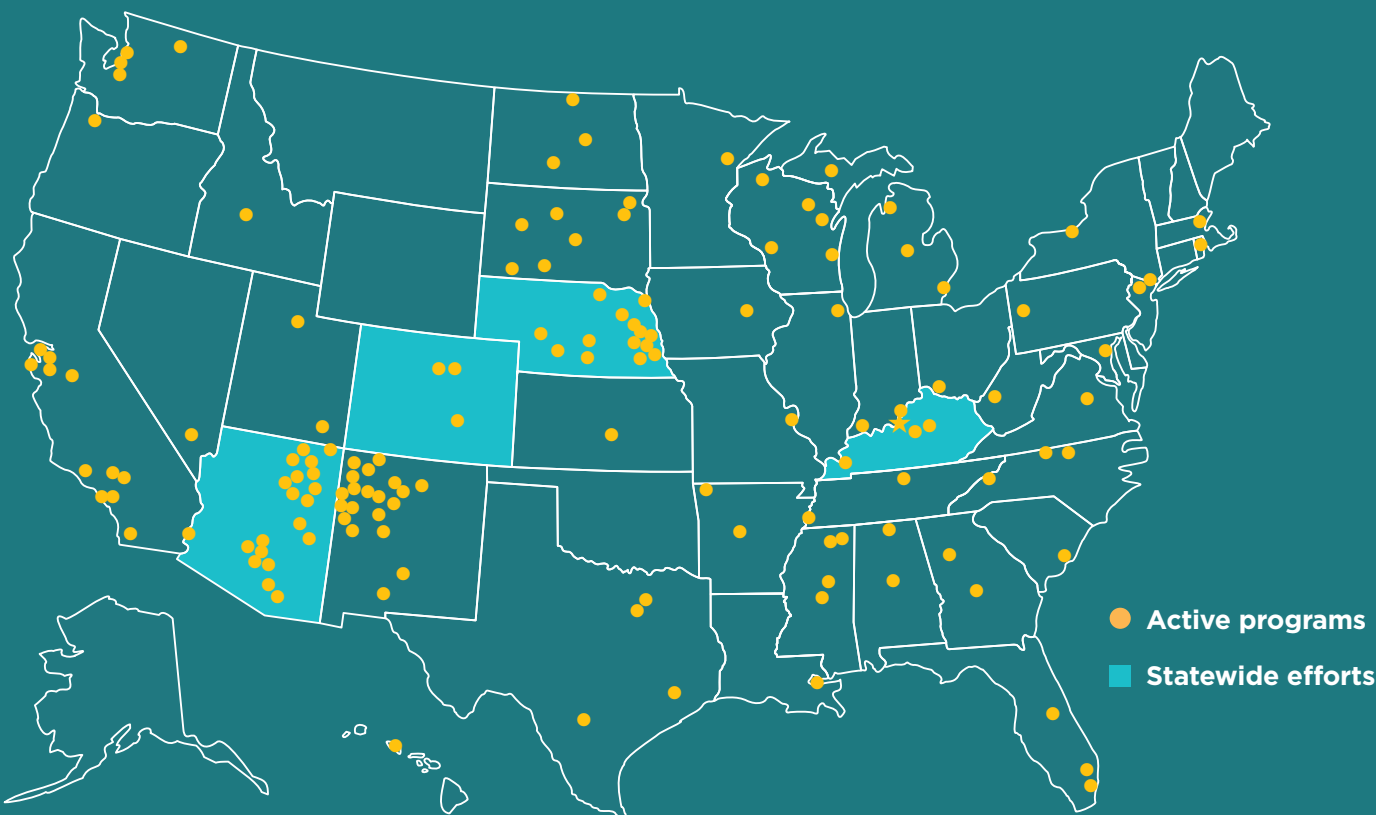


E. Susan Gourley, Ph.D
Board Chair
Retired Superintendent,
Lincoln (NE) Public Schools

E. Susan Gourley

2023 Reach and Impact

Reach



Digital Presence

7.8 million

WONDEROPOLIS®

visitors

12,399

NATIONAL LITERACY DIRECTORY

Programs

1,305

Webinars

registrants

Impact

Participants in NCFL programming demonstrate increases in:

- Student attendance
- Literacy practices at home
- Social capital among parenting adults
- Parental success with education/workforce goals
- School/family partnerships

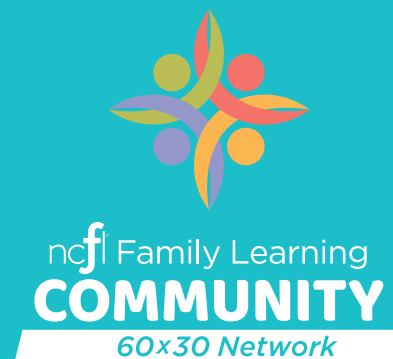


Learning in Community

In 2023, NCFL publicly launched our bold vision to align and coordinate family learning systems in 60 communities by 2030. Based on NCFL's legacy work and fueled by family learning community networks that include families, local governments, schools, nonprofits, and funders, NCFL is working to integrate family-focused programming across sectors and create greater access and opportunity for all families.

We're proud to work alongside community partners to design and implement family learning system blueprints that intentionally include socially, culturally, and economically diverse families as key architects in creating innovative and equitable solutions that increase opportunity, access, and outcomes for all. Current Family Learning Communities include Frankfort, Lexington, and Louisville in Kentucky. Additional communities in Georgia, Michigan, and Arizona are underway with more announcements expected in the coming months.

NCFL is equally excited to continue our Family and Child Education (FACE) work in tribal communities. Now in its 34th year, this partnership with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) works to promote lifelong learning, strengthen family-school-community partnerships, and celebrate the cultural and linguistic heritage of American Indian communities.



54 tribal schools served



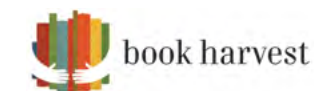
Partners in Family Learning

NCFL is grateful for the state and national partners who work alongside us in service to families.

National Partners



State Partners



Family Literacy

2023 proved to be a very productive year for the Family Literacy team. We worked hard to establish a common understanding of family literacy definitions and practices throughout the organization to further solidify our collective understanding of NCFL’s four component model. Alongside this process, we updated the implementation training manual and training slides to highlight our current family literacy programmatic structures.

We also developed and codified a seven-step process for pre-implementation which includes multiple resource points and two meetings that are held with family literacy sites prior to the implantation training. This has been very useful in clarifying information about plans and expectations with potential family literacy sites and setting sites up for success.

Our updated systems as well as a newly-created four-tiered coaching model have resulted in updated cost models for family literacy programming. By taking on a multi-tiered approach to our cost models and services, we hope to expand interest in family literacy services nationally while also focusing on equity of offerings.

Drawing from these updated systems and cost models, we held two implementation trainings in Kentucky and Colorado in 2023 and have five to ten trainings on the horizon for 2024. These trainings highlighted our increased collaborations across teams and verticals as they brought in both content specialists and trainers while also drawing on notions of co-design from communities.



Read our new brief to learn more about NCFL’s four component model for family literacy

[Bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLiteracyBrief](https://bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLiteracyBrief)



See Inna speak about her family literacy experience at the 2023 Families Learning Conference

[Bit.ly/NCFL_Video_Synia](https://bit.ly/NCFL_Video_Synia)

From the Field

Inna Synia’s world turned upside down when Russia invaded her home of Kherson, Ukraine in February 2022. With her husband and three children, Inna fled the war, arriving in Nebraska with their entire life packed in four suitcases. The challenge of rebuilding her life in a new country was made even more daunting by her inability to communicate with the people around her. Tasks such as going to the hospital, understanding how her children were doing in school, and navigating the city of Lincoln felt monumental.

Now employed at a hospital and studying at community college, Inna credits her family literacy teachers for helping her adapt to life in America. “I will always remember this time,” she says of her experience in NCFL programming, “The way that children remember their first grade and first teacher.” Her time in the program did much more than improve Inna’s English: she learned valuable information that helped her adapt to American society, overcame her fear of conversing with native English speakers thanks to classroom conversation practice, and formed a community with other family literacy participants.

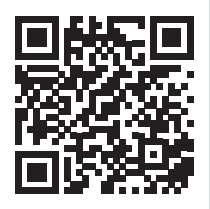
“I am grateful to everyone who works at family literacy. Thank you for helping us to adapt to the USA faster. Without you, it would have been much more difficult.”



Family Engagement

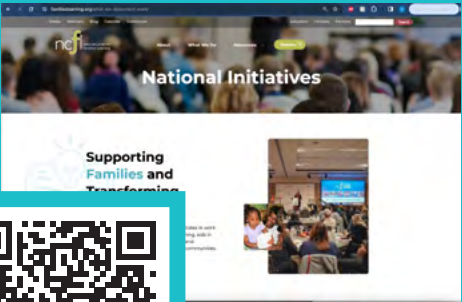
NCFL’s family engagement body of work continues to focus on three areas of: P-12, Birth through Five, and Out of School Time. We entered a new contract with Jefferson County Public Schools (KY) to support family engagement and early childhood efforts with core programming like Activate! Local, as well as coaching and technical assistance around family engagement. We are using this work to inform and shape a more robust P-12 District Family Engagement model to be piloted and fully launched in the fall of 2024.

Thanks to new grant funding, we have expanded our Say and Play playgroups from a Birth-3 to a Birth-5 model, allowing us to reach a broader group of families with this key early childhood programming. Finally, we continue to refine our offerings in the Out of School time space. In 2023, we strengthened our focus on libraries thanks to a Public Library Association grant, *Developing Practices for Authentic Engagement of Spanish-Speaking Families*. This grant kicked off in October and will build the capacity of practitioners within state libraries to meaningfully engage with and better serve the needs of Spanish-speaking families.



Read our new brief to learn more about NCFL’s family engagement approach and the research that underpins it

[Bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyEngagementBrief](https://bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyEngagementBrief)



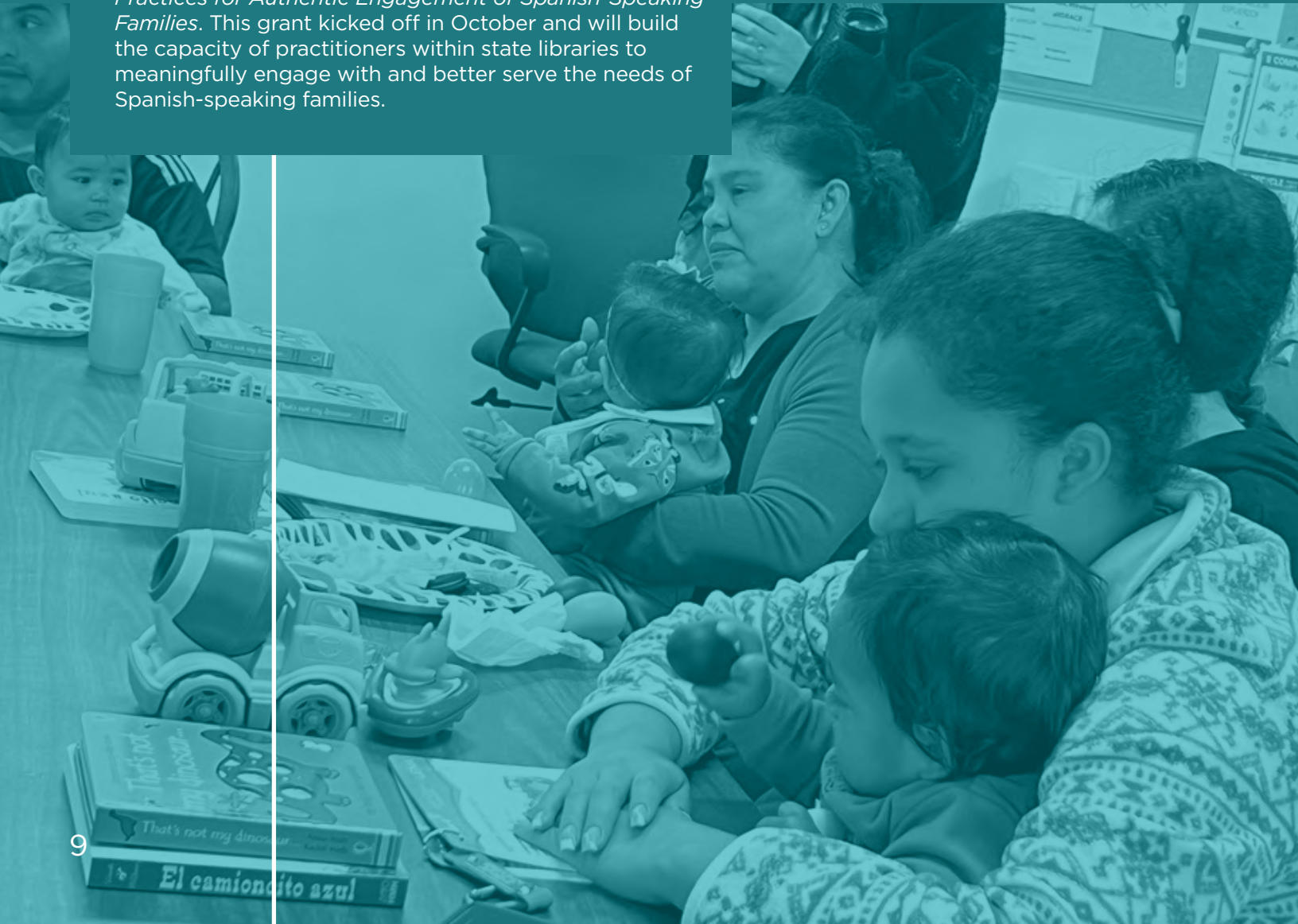
Learn more about Toyota’s Driving Possibilities, which makes this partnership possible

[FamiliesLearning.org/what-we-do/current-work/](https://familieslearning.org/what-we-do/current-work/)

From the Field

As the second largest school district in Kentucky, serving over 40,000 students in the Lexington metropolitan area, Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) is keenly aware of the connections between family engagement and student achievement. To support family engagement efforts, FCPS district leaders participated in NCFL’s Partnering with Families for Student Success, a professional learning opportunity that presents family engagement research and provides practical strategies for using this research to connect with families.

Miranda Scully, FCPS Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Director, celebrated the spreading and scaling made possible through this partnership. “We are on the mission to create FACE Champions throughout Fayette County Public Schools,” says Scully. “Partnering with Families for Student Success allows our district to expand beyond single trainings to create professional learning communities focused on building the capacity of our staff to best serve families. We are reaching staff in various roles and at different schools to provide learning that shifts beliefs and enhances knowledge, confidence, skills.”



Family Leadership

The Family Leadership team had an exciting year filled with successful programs under our Activate! umbrella. Activate! National, funded through PNC and Kellogg, graduated its second cohort with 24 participants from 10 different states and communities. A third-year has been solidified with participants from year 1 and year 2 and will kick off in Nashville, TN on February 3rd and 4th. The third-year focus will be on co-designing anti-racism resources for advocates and families of the early childhood sector.

For Activate! Local our Tarrant County (TX) cohort graduated in June of 2024 with 16 participants. A Jefferson County Public Schools (KY) Activate! cohort graduated in May of 2023 and a second Activate! JCPs Early Childhood leadership cohort kicked off in early December. A new Activate! cohort began in the Denver, CO area in October using a co-facilitation model that we are piloting for training on-the-ground local facilitators to implement the program model. This new model will set us up for better seeding and scaling in the future.



Read our new brief to learn more about NCFL's family leadership approach and models

[Bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLeadershipBrief](https://bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLeadershipBrief)



Watch as Ra'Chelle recounts her family's story and her experience with Activate! National at the 2023 Families Learning Conference

[Bit.ly/NCFL_Video_RaChelleDennis](https://bit.ly/NCFL_Video_RaChelleDennis)

“I am thankful to Martha's Table and Activate! for giving me the opportunity to amplify my voice.”

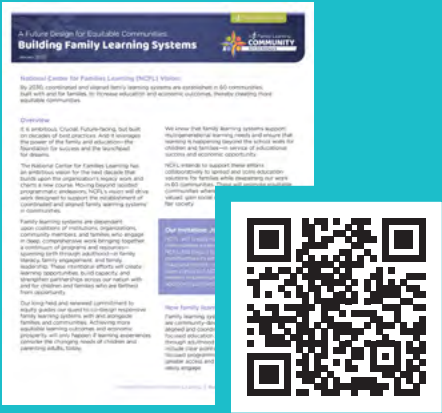
From the Field

Mother of two Ra'Chelle Dennis learned the value of finding an educational community after sending her youngest son, Noah, to an early childhood education program at Martha's Table. Having experienced the impact that a passionate, multigenerational support system had on her son's development and her personal goals, she soon found herself applying for NCFL's Activate! National network. While initially unsure if her life experience as a parent would be valued or impactful for the program, Ra'Chelle describes her first session as eye-opening. “Sitting amongst my peers, having discussions on early childhood equity issues occurring across each state was empowering,” she says. “Sharing our experiences and coming up with solutions and policy changes, really helped me to see how big and important an issue this is on a national level.”

Through her time in Activate! National, Ra'Chelle developed a drive to speak up for early childhood providers. Encouraged to learn more about parent advocacy, she began working on ways to persuade mothers on the importance of finding a support community through an early childhood program, and the vital need for parent leadership in their children's lives. “The more we, as parents, take leadership roles in schools and our communities to advocate for our early childhood educators it will positively impact the outcome of our children's trajectory from poverty to prosperity.”

Learning Across the Age Continuum

NCFL is committed to facilitating programming that encourages lifelong learning and creates multigenerational spaces where families can learn together from birth to adulthood.



Read our brief to learn more about NCFL's multigenerational systems approach.

[Bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLearningBrief](https://bit.ly/NCFL_FamilyLearningBrief)

Early Childhood

Play with Purpose brings together children ages 0-3 and their caregivers through playgroups that provide techniques to intentionally integrate learning opportunities into adult/child interactions.



Primary and Secondary

Family Service Learning - Science invites youth, caregivers, and teachers to design science learning experiences together in a virtual reality environment.



Adult

Activate! National connects caregivers and educators from around the country to co-design equitable practices and policies for early childhood systems.



Research Advisory Council

NCFL's Research Advisory Council (RAC) supports our evaluation efforts and research into the growth of effective practices and programs rooted in eradicating poverty through multigenerational learning while also creating space for these researchers to elevate their work on a national stage. In 2023, RAC members conducted concurrent sessions, panel discussions, and mainstage presentations at the Families Learning Conference and began work on a collaborative paper with expected publication in 2024.



Dr. Lisa Gennetian
Duke University



Dr. Shanette Porter
Student Experience
Research Network



Dr. Kara Hirano
Search Institute



Dr. Esther Prins
Pennsylvania State University,
Goodling Institute for Research in
Family Literacy and Institute for
Study of Adult Literacy



Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka
University of North Carolina,
Frank Porter Graham Child
Development Institute and Equity
Research Action Coalition



Dr. Beth Redbird
Northwestern University



Dr. Kimberly Kelly
Michigan State University



Dr. John Sabatini
University of Memphis



Dr. Emily Markovich Morris
The Brookings Institution and Center for
University Education



Dr. Steven Sheldon
Johns Hopkins University and
Center for School, Family, and
Community Partnerships



Dr. Kristen H. Perry
University of Kentucky



Dr. Ivory A. Toldson
Howard University and NAACP

2023 Families Learning Conference



37 states plus Washington, DC, Uganda, and Canada



672 attendees

89%

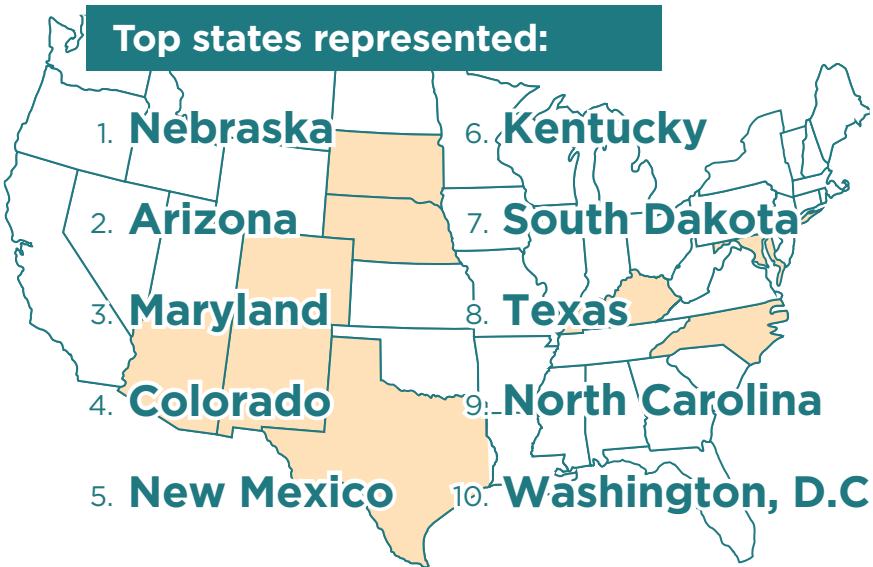
attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the conference overall

88%

attendees would recommend the conference to a friend or colleague

Attendees represented:

- 81 community-based organizations
- 35 national organizations
- 40 school districts
- 57 schools



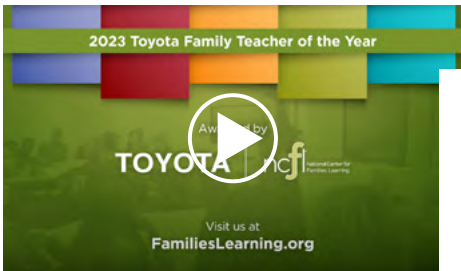
ncfi
Families Learning
CONFERENCE
2023
Omaha, NE
#NCFL23

“I learned how to engage stakeholders in the community to develop resources for a family learning program.”

2023 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year



Sergio de Alba
R.M. Miano Elementary
Los Banos, California



Watch an interview with Sergio
https://bit.ly/NCFL_Video_TOY23



Sharon Darling Innovation Fund

Established in honor of NCFL's founder, the Sharon Darling Innovation Fund (SDIF) exists to improve adult and child learning outcomes, leading to equitable, thriving families and communities. The SDIF Family Learning System Challenge, first awarded in 2023, recognized three winning organizations with \$30,000 each to implement their projects



Sharon Darling
INNOVATION FUND

LA FUERZA | LITERACY de Familias Latinas PARTNERS

The grant will be used to create workshop curriculum with families in Philadelphia and Dallas that will bring to life STEM-related lessons from “La Fuerza de Familias Latinas.” The hands-on activities will encourage caregivers and children to develop science literacy and build the cognitive foundations of STEM learning.



Bright Beginnings serves families experiencing housing instability and financial hardship in Washington, D.C. They will utilize this grant to create an Alumni Support Network for families whose children have transitioned to kindergarten, with a goal of continuing support through high school graduation.



The grant will be used to develop a program that encourages and empowers parents and caregivers to take a more playful approach to parenting. Parents and caregivers will help develop and evaluate the curriculum, then the “Playful Path to Parenting” will be deployed statewide through parent-educator training supported by the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Progress Snapshot

NCFL is committed to a diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda that is woven into every aspect of our organizational structure, strategic plan, and program offerings. In 2023, we continued to evolve and grow our commitments in the following ways:

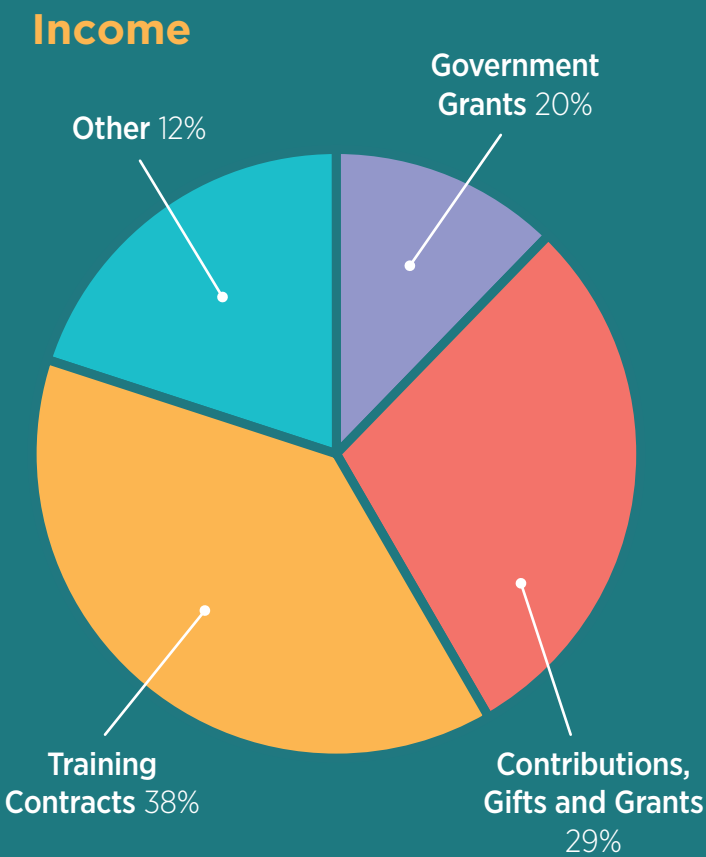
- Established a new 60x30 vision to guide NCFL’s work
- Created and evaluated NCFL’s first-ever DEI Learning Agenda
- Embedded our DEI commitments into all team work plans
- Provided opportunities for staff growth and support in decision making through the Equity and Action Work Group
- Continuously improved recruiting and hiring processes to attract and onboard more racially diverse candidates
- Added two mental health paid time off days for all staff, improved parental leave policy with employee feedback, and sustained all-staff meeting free blocks
- Allocated financial resources to (1) build staff capacity in DEI areas, (2) hire a full-time Manager, DEI position to support this work, and (3) use research-based assessments to benchmark individual and organizational DEI competencies
- Evolved appraisal system to reflect a 360 degree approach, enhancing equity in the process
- Increased diversity in representation within videos, photos, authorship, and event speaking roles
- Developed free resources for the field including Equity in Family Engagement Toolkit and best practices for inclusion
- Established equity design principles to undergird all programming



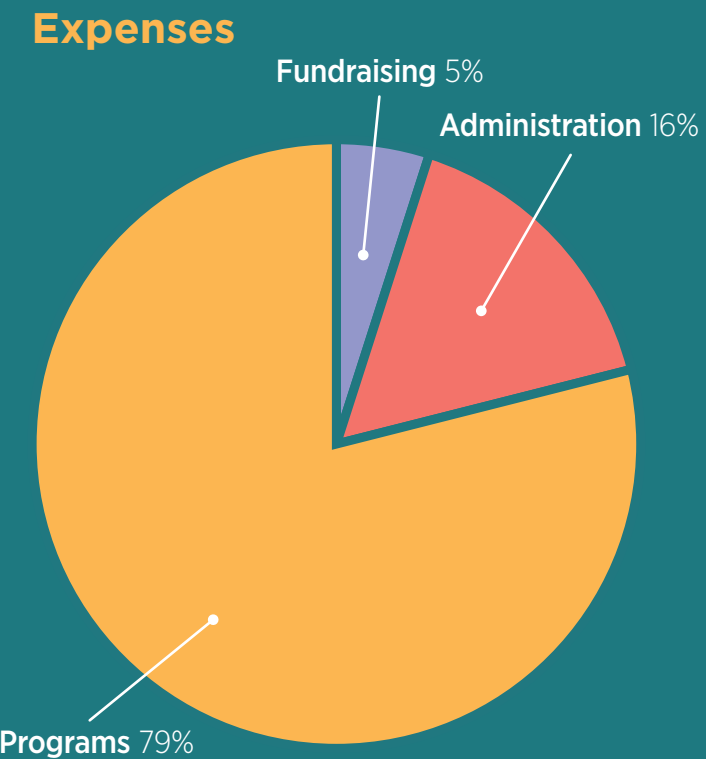
Financial Reporting

July 1, 2022 — June 30, 2023

Income	
Government Grants	\$2,147,996
Training Contracts	\$4,120,537
Contributions, Gifts and Grants	\$3,159,412
Other	\$1,296,617
Total	\$10,724,562

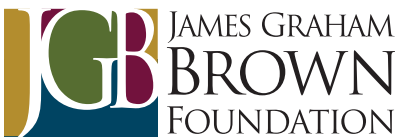


Expenses	
Programs	\$7,252,335
Administration	\$1,479,889
Fundraising	\$502,760
Total	\$9,234,984



Change in Net Assets	\$1,489,578
Net Assets End of Year	\$15,432,758

Supporters



Sutherland Foundation

Donors

On behalf of our team and the families we work with, NCFL would like to thank the following donors for their generous support in 2023.

\$1 Million+	\$1,000-9,999			
U.S. Department of Education	Richard E. Barr	Candy Magaña	Whitney Fields	Amy Parish
Toyota	Jovita Carranza	Kim McHugh	Dr. Becky Goetzinger	Tony Peyton
	E. Susan Gourley, Ph.D.	Captain Houston Mills	Laurie Goldberg	Pledgeling Foundation
\$100,000-999,999	John L. & Julia M. Helm Fund	Marc Otte	Melissa Hall	Abby Robbins
Carnegie Corporation of New York	Laura & Andrew Means	Meredith M. Parente	Adriane Hardin-Davis	Ava Robinson
Dollar General Literacy Foundation	Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau	Cory Ross	Julia Harper	James Rollason
James Graham Brown Foundation	PNC Foundation	David Seidenberg	Andrea Hatfield	Michael Rossi
Louisville Metro Government	Dr. Felicia Cumings Smith	Tracy Teater	Katherine Henry	Maureen Rudy
PNC Grow Up Great®	Holly Walters	Sarah & David Vislisel	Lexie Hernandez	Marcio Santos
Rainwater Charitable Foundation	Mary Gwen Wheeler	Eric Washington	Orlimarie Hernandez-Ocasio	Alyssa Schlicher
Toyota USA Foundation		Laura Westberg	Julie Hudson	Vanessa Scott
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	\$250-999	Camara Wilson	Sherri Hudson	Laura Shroyer
	Diane Brown	David Yeskel	Aleena Ibrahim	Simon & Schuster, Inc.
\$50,000-99,999	Shea Coughlin Snider & Bradley Snider	\$1-249	Kristine Jacobson	Kendra Smiley
Sutherland Foundation	Jessica Craig	Amazon Smile	Vikki Katz, Ph.D.	L'Toya Smith
	Dr. Joshua Cramer	Sofia Aragon	Leesa Kraeger	Spotify
\$25,000-49,999	Mary Anne & Charles Cronan	Rebecca Barnwell	Anthony Layne	Andy Stine
Heising-Simons Foundation	Sharon Darling	Nancy Bedore	Brandi Layton	Julia Taborsak
Thomas & Genevieve Marsh	Natalie Donovan	Jessica Boren	Brenda Logan	Linda Tull
Rosztoczy Foundation	Deenie Espinoza	Cherry Boyles	Amel Lodono	Sara Ulliman
	Zarina Gumbatova	Chante' Burg	Si'Yan Lumas	Diana Vela
\$10,000-24,999	Half Price Books Community Service Corporation	Dianna Carlson	Antionette Mallett	Lisa Vu
Buffett Early Childhood Fund	Boris Kofman	Lesley Carstens	Robin McDonald-Meinicke	Louise R. Wall
Collaborative Center for Literacy Development	Kroger Community Rewards	Nicole Chestang Moore	Allison Miller	Scott Walraven
Mildred V. Horn Foundation	Christopher Lehman	Cara David	Joell Miller	Jay W. Warren
PNC Foundation		Kristine Daynes	Wendee Mullikin	Leslie Wilson
		Christine Donovan	Danielle Norton	Carrie Wohlschlegel
		Chad Farabee	Our Promise: CA Employees Giving at Work	Jessica Yoder

Board of Directors

NCFL’s board represents a group of national leaders who share their professional expertise across diverse fields to provide organizational governance and dedicate their time, talents, and resources to support NCFL in fulfilling its mission. All of us are sincerely grateful for the generosity and energy of these incredible individuals who help ensure the longevity of our work.



Richard E. Barr
Retired Vice President,
Airline Operations, UPS



Candy Magaña, MPA.
Director, Health Equity Innovation,
Solutions, and Transformation
Humana, Inc.



Nicole M. Chestang
Board Vice Chair
Vice President, Learning and
Leadership Development
EGF Accelerator



Captain Houston Mills
Vice President, Flight Operations
& Safety, UPS



Sharon Darling
Founder, Retired
National Center for Families Learning



Meredith M. Parente
Financial Consultant; Retired Vice
President/Treasurer, Brown-Forman
Corporation



Deenie Espinoza
Former Family Literacy Student
Manager, Student Service Adult Basic
Education for College and Career
Pima Community College



Holly Walters
Group Vice President and Chief
Information Officer, Toyota Motor
North America



E. Susan Gourley, Ph.D.
Board Chair
Retired Superintendent,
Lincoln Public Schools



Jay W. Warren
Director of Compliance and Ethics
PPL Corporation



Vikki Katz, Ph.D.
Professor
Chapman University School
of Communication



Mary Gwen Wheeler
Consultant
Education Policy Strategist



Christopher Lehman
Founding Director,
The Educator Collaborative





National Center for
Families Learning

IMPACT REPORT 2023

FamiliesLearning.org