

# Enewsletter July 2025

## Numbers

### All Around



## Nebraska Growing Readers



## Family Literacy

We talk about family literacy and the adoption of shared reading habits a lot, but what does family literacy actually mean? This month, we'd like to take some time to explore the federal definition of Family Literacy with our partners at the Statewide Family Engagement Center and National Center for Families Learning.

Family Literacy has 4 components:

1. interactive literacy activities between parents and children;
2. support in parenting activities;
3. parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, economic self-sufficiency, and personal goal attainment; and
4. age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.



**Adult Education:** Programming that supports parenting adults in achieving their education or workforce goals.

**Children's Education:** Educational programming that supports academic growth, social-emotional learning, and physical development.

**Parent Time:** Opportunities for parenting adults to learn together in support of families' self-selected goals.

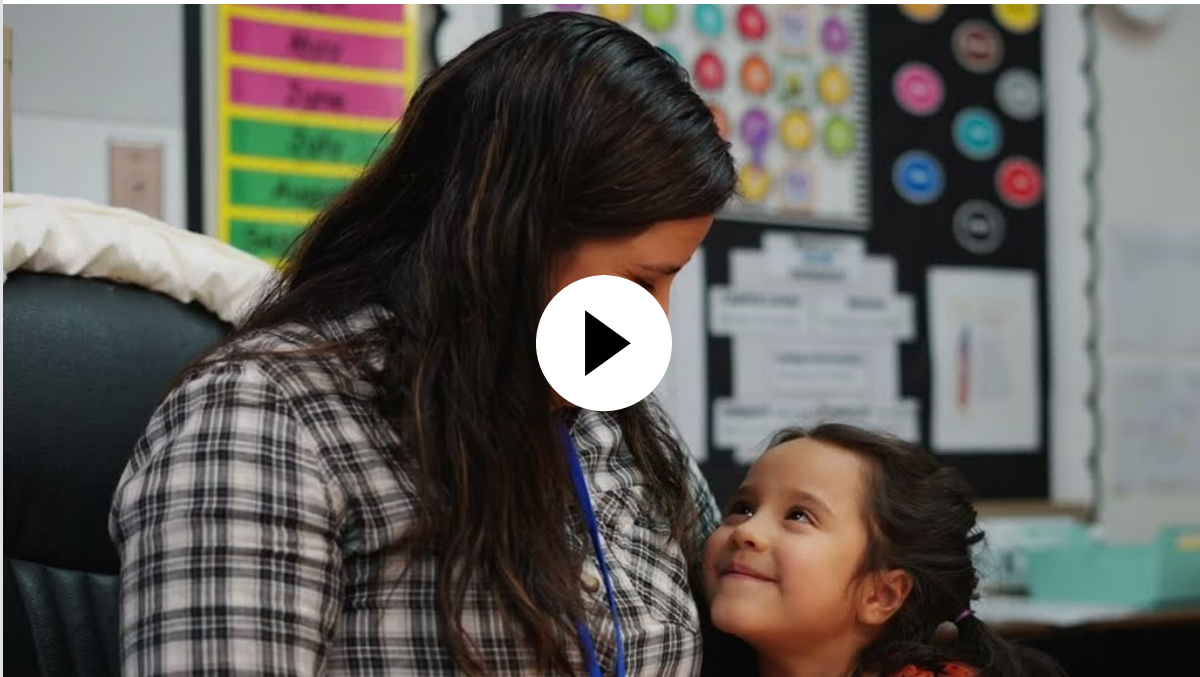
**PACT Time:** Multigenerational programming where parenting adults engage in joint learning activities with their children in educational settings, their homes, and the community.

As we explore these 4 components in the next few newsletters, think about how your work as a child care provider applies to one or more of these four components. Do you think of yourself as an educator? You are!

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## Rethinking Literacy

We often think of “literacy” as words and images that come in print form, but an expanded definition of the word, of which print is only a part, may be more useful in this digital age. Today’s literacy is often multilingual and may incorporate numeral, digital, health, and cultural learning and comprehension. We thus need to learn to build knowledge using a variety of sources and forms of representation.



## What is Family Literacy

Want to learn more about the meaning of family literacy? Watch this short video from the Statewide Family Engagement Center to learn more.

Information in this month's newsletter is drawn from National Center for Families Learning's Literacy Brief.

[Read the Brief](#)

## NGR News

### When Dinosaurs Roamed the Library



At the Schuyler Library, there are parents and children gathered around a table laid out with dinosaur and patriotic red, white, and blue cookies. There are doting grandparents, representatives of Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR), and the librarian. There is the local Scout troop. And, in the midst of it all, there is a 10-foot orange-brown T-Rex working the crowd.

This is what a literacy community looks like.

Why is this unusual mix of characters gathered? To hear two recently released NGR books written by local author Sheri Balak read aloud. Balak is a lifelong community member of



Schuyler who worked as a school speech and language pathologist for 44 years and who has penned *Rex Visits Schuyler* and *What Scouts Do*. The books came about as part of an NGR writers workshop held in the town. Balak is proud of her community and said she wrote the books because she wanted to “introduce the people who live in Schuyler to a little bit of the history.”

[Read the Full Article](#)

## Nebraska Book Spotlight

### More Than a Book

Spend time bonding with your child over reading and an activity. Nebraska Growing Readers has plenty of books that allow you to spend some fun, relaxed reading time together, and then amp things up with an exciting activity.



*Fun on a Slide* encourages outdoor activity and is a great way to set up a trip to the local park or backyard time. The book also gets children to use their imagination and to think about their impact on others who might use the slide after them.

-What do you like to do on a slide?  
-What else do you like to do at a playground?

[Read the Book](#)



### My First Day of School at Educare

Chantelle Marin

A new school year is just around the corner and some children may be apprehensive about that first day. *My First Day at Educare* doesn't just speak specifically to the Educare experience, but it also offers a comforting story to any reluctant new attendees.

-Encourage your child to share their feelings about school. It's okay to be nervous!  
-Ask your child questions about their day.

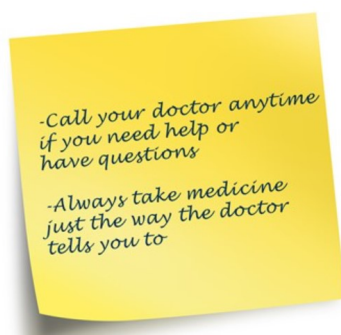
[Read the Book](#)

Did you enjoy reading these books?  
Want to read other books available  
in the NGR library?

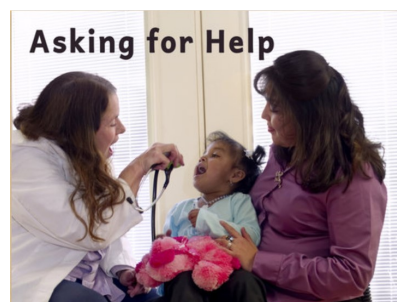
[Visit the NGR Library](#)

## Family Guides

The Nebraska Growing Readers website now offers a variety of family guides designed to inform and support families on topics such as health care, safety and prevention, wellness, language and literacy, development and parenting, relationships and behavior, and play as learning. The books are easy-to-read guides that can be used by providers and families.



It's not always easy to know when it's best to speak with a doctor, and new community members may be reluctant to do so. *Asking for Help* offers friendly advice and encouragement on when to contact a medical professional.



[Read the Book](#)

## View our full collection of Family Guides

[NGR Family Guide Library](#)

## What is the Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC)?

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) leads the Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) grant in Nebraska. In collaboration with local school districts, NCFL is implementing our two-generation, four-component model of family literacy programming under the “Family Learning Community” program name.

Current Communities are:

- Bellevue Public Schools
- Crete Public Schools
- Columbus Public Schools
- Millard Public Schools
- O'Neill Public Schools
- Learning Community Center of North Omaha

If you're in one of these communities and would like to get connected to the Family Learning Community, reach out to Hannah Van Horn at [hvanhorn@familieslearning.org](mailto:hvanhorn@familieslearning.org).



**See the great SFEC work happening in Nebraska**

**Want more information about  
Nebraska Statewide Family  
Engagement Center and NCFL's work  
in Nebraska?**

[Learn More](#)

## **Join Our Facebook Group**

Nebraska Growing Readers has a Facebook Group where you can get up-to-date information about the program; engage with this program and the other NGR provider sites; and share ideas, resources, and tips for getting kids excited about reading.

[Follow Us on Facebook](#)

This private group, will require you to answer a question to get in. There are no wrong answers. We just want to assure a safe space specifically for providers.

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## Learn More about Nebraska

[See Nebraska-Related Books](#)

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the library of content written by Nebraskans and about the various cultural experiences you can find in the state. Want to know more about Nebraska books? Visit our Spotlight on Books page to see what's happening in your state.

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Nebraska Growing Readers is a collaboration between Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Unite for Literacy.

If you have questions of comments concerning the program, please contact [Greta Carlson](#) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org).



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