



Executive Director Opportunity Guide

www.educareschools.org

Educare Lincoln's mission is to establish a high-quality, one-stop community learning center for at risk children and families; implementing specialized learning environments, which develop children academically and socially, empowering them to become productive members of society through research and evidenced based practices.

About Educare Lincoln

[Educare Lincoln](#) is an early learning school serving over 150 children from birth to five years old and their families in a full day, full year program. Educare prepares children for success in school and life, and also helps parents develop the skills they need to champion their child's education. Several years of rigorous evaluation show that when children leave Educare for elementary school, the majority of them are academically, socially and emotionally prepared for kindergarten. Begun through a partnership among the Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (UNL), and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund (BECF), Educare Lincoln enjoys local access to partner-related supports such as funding and implementation of assessments, student teachers from UNL's early childhood education programs, student nurses to support family health activities, professional development programs sponsored by LPS, as well as enrichment activities provided by a variety of community arts organizations.

Opened in 2013, Educare Lincoln specifically benefits from a relationship with the [Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative](#) (NECC), which provides a variety of programmatic support and operational services to the school. The third Educare location built in Nebraska, its proximity to the state capitol empowers Educare Lincoln to serve as a living laboratory accessible to legislators as a platform for policy change. A comprehensive program incorporating the science that young children need to flourish and serving as a role model and advocate of early learning best practices in every community, Educare strives to be a catalyst to improve quality early learning for thousands more children across the state and millions more across the country.

Educare Lincoln is part of a national network of effective early childhood education schools. Nationwide, the network boasts 24 schools built on research from early childhood development, education, social work and other allied fields. Four core features compose the Educare model: data utilization, embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices and intensive family engagement.

Strong leadership at Educare schools supports the implementation of the model and develops the culture for high-quality early childhood education and family support services. Additionally, Educare schools connect with community-based programs that help children and families access additional resources such as healthcare and mental health services. As a key educational and facility partner, Lincoln Public Schools was ranked 2nd in quality of education in an eight-state area of the Midwest.



The Opportunity: Executive Director



Educare Lincoln is seeking a passionate and dedicated Executive Director to lead into its next five years and implement the newly crafted strategic plan. The Executive Director will advance the organization's current and future early childhood programs, providing leadership for community partnerships, revenue development, blended funding efforts (i.e. public and private via grants and philanthropy), program effectiveness and growth, and fiscal oversight, all while serving as the public face and voice of Educare in the community and with key stakeholders. Leading a staff of nearly 50 (1 direct report-School Director), the next Executive Director will focus on community partnerships and program development, strong communication, and building external collaborations that ensure the students and families of Lincoln are at the forefront of early childhood educational best practice.

The new Executive Director will report to the Board Chair and work closely with the Board of Directors to strengthen and refine Educare's programs and operations, further develop Educare's public presence and impact, and support the Board in its own expansion. A passionate and dedicated leader, they will simultaneously guide internal operations and represent the interests of Educare and its families in the community. Maintaining a strong community reputation as the face of Educare and leading with an emphasis on maintaining and growing best practices in educational and childcare services are critical to success. Bringing demonstrated nonprofit leadership experience, the Executive Director will create and maintain highly productive relationships with staff, families, board members, donors, elected officials and community partners. The Executive Director will initially be largely focused on internal operations and ensuring a strong, stable team, with a gradual transition to external relationships in their initial three years.

Performance Objectives

Visionary Leadership

- Promote and practice Educare’s mission, vision and core values. Collaborate with the Board of Directors, community stakeholders, staff and parents to implement the organization’s strategic plan to provide excellence and innovation in early childhood education.
- Foster an organizational culture that encourages collaboration and communication among staff, families, board members, community partners, donors, and needed others, ensuring that early childhood champions represent voices from all stakeholder groups.
- Build and maintain collaborative relationships with other organizations and entities whose mission intersects with that of Educare to achieve collective impact. Craft a strategy to raise the profile and work of Educare on a local, regional and state level, creating high-level strategy and vision.
- Ensure the national platform of Educare is promoted via public-private partnerships that create strong schools and longtime champions who will amplify shared goals of helping the most vulnerable children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Engage with and contribute to the Educare Learning Network as a part of strengthening Educare Lincoln, its team, and the community.

Administration and Management

- Realign and build a cohesive, engaged and agile team focused on enhancing partnerships with families and fostering a positive workplace that strives for excellence, retention and goal attainment. Create clear and achievable goals and expectations for the school as a whole and direct reports (currently the School Director). Ensure goals are met through key milestones within a measurable framework.
- Ensure strong school operations via the hiring of a permanent School Director (now long-term interim) with a culture that promotes and encourages professional growth and development of staff through education and training opportunities as appropriate, as well as the Educare Learning Network.
- Communicate and provide frequent opportunities for interaction between staff, families and network partners as the culture is rebuilt in a positive, retention-focused manner; including but not limited to establishing committees and workgroups that engage others.
- Oversee and liaise with the NECC regarding fiscal activities including budgeting, reporting, audits and other areas as required by organizational needs and applicable laws and regulations.
- Leverage the back-office support of the NECC to ensure efficient and effective financial and human resources operations.
- Confirm all regulatory requirements around quality and safety are in place, ensuring—and even exceeding—the highest standards of performance.



Performance Objectives (Continued)

Community Relationships, Engagements and Partnerships

- Raise the profile of Educare Lincoln locally, regionally and nationally while supporting the initiatives and needs of the children and families it serves.
- As the chief spokesperson, serve as an articulate, passionate and visible public advocate of Educare and its practices in order to influence the greater community with regard to policy and promotion of early childhood best practice.
- Foster strong relationships with local early childhood education leaders to encourage consistency in programs, sharing of best practices and an eye toward growth.
- Represent Educare Lincoln and its interests impactfully in the Educare network and professional organizations, community groups and other spaces relevant to the work of Educare and its mission.
- Maintain and cultivate positive working relationships with children and families served; state, regional and national partners; funders and peer organizations in a collegial and creative manner.

Philanthropy and Revenue Development

- Provide strategic guidance for securing revenue from diverse sources. Cultivate meaningful relationships with top donors and community leaders in support of fundraising plans that uphold strategies and priorities adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Increase board involvement in fundraising and friend-raising. Work with and provide training for the board to create an overall culture of philanthropy.
- Develop, expand and diversify all public and private revenue streams. Cultivate a portfolio of relationships related to all revenue sources and lead stewardship activities on major fundable initiatives for the organization.
- Ensure a strong financial operating position with an appropriate mix of local/state/federal contracts and private philanthropy.

Board Development and Governance

- Develop strong and impactful relationships with the Board of Directors, with a focus on supporting their role as leaders in governance and ambassadorship.
- Guide the board in membership recruitment and the implementation of best practices in nonprofit governance. Support the board in its own efforts for training, growth and diversification.
- Serve as the strongest link of communication between board members, donors, staff and the community at-large/other stakeholders.
- Provide staff leadership to the board as it relates to the budgeting process and maintaining effective fiscal controls and policies.



The Qualified Candidate

Educare Lincoln is in search of a strong, passionate and energetic leader to propel the organization forward and establish it as a vibrant community partner serving the children and families of Lincoln. The Executive Director will bring demonstrated success in nonprofit organization executive leadership with teams and budgets of similar size. The ideal candidate will have effective relationship building and interpersonal skills, demonstrated success in board leadership and development, and bring or quickly develop a strong affiliation with the local community (e.g. civic, cultural, educational, corporate, etc.). Prior educational/child development experience is strongly desired to ensure best practice remains at the forefront.

The Executive Director will provide leadership and vision to position Educare as a comprehensive model of early childhood programs for at-risk children and their families, while at the same time creating confidence and ensuring stability frame the work of staff, children, partners and families. The successful candidate will have a minimum of seven years of progressive, executive level experience in a nonprofit organization, and bring demonstrated success in program management and board development.

Immersion in the Lincoln community will be vital to the success of the Executive Director. Demonstrated ability, comfort, and success in working with diverse groups of people in multilingual/multicultural environments. Experience in the early childhood education industry is ideal.



The Qualified Candidate (Continued)

Specific Requirements Include:

- A minimum of seven years of progressive experience in leadership and management of nonprofit organizations, with documented ability to strengthen organizational governance.
- Track record in implementing high quality programs that serve children and families, including ongoing program evaluation and improvement.
- Strong experience working directly with/for a Board of Directors. Demonstrated success recruiting and retaining Board members.
- Proven ability to build strong external relationships with a variety of local leaders, school personnel, public leadership, partner organizations and other stakeholders.
- Ability to lead and implement fundraising initiatives across a spectrum of annual, major and long-term giving methods.
- Strong analytic and strategic-thinking skills, with demonstrated ability to create and implement complex plans.
- Experience developing strategies to successfully increase revenue and diversify funding sources.
- Proven ability to navigate complex regulatory environments in child-focused, government funded programs and partnerships.
- Conversant in concepts surrounding early childhood education and advocacy.
- Career track record that shows stability with an organization as demonstrated by progressive growth or tenure.
- Knowledge of Lincoln and the diverse aspects of the community would be helpful but is not required. Candidates who are deeply engaged in their local communities are encouraged to apply.
- Bachelor's degree in a related field (e.g. Education, Child Development, Management, Nonprofit, etc.) required; Master's degree highly preferred.
- Experience working in a multilingual environment is beneficial.



This position offers a competitive salary with strong benefits, all benchmarked in the NECC network. Relocation support may be available upon discussion. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

Educare Lincoln is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant criteria.

In and Around Lincoln, Nebraska



Lincoln is in the middle of it all. Located in the southeast corner of the state, Lincoln is about 50 miles southwest of Omaha. With nearly 300,000 people who already call it home, it has a thriving economy, [low cost of living](#), ongoing business expansion, influx of talent and endless opportunity. It is vibrant and safe, with cultural and entertainment benefits of a large city, with the feel of a friendly Midwestern community. Recently named by Gallup as the Happiest City in America, Lincoln is a community full of collaboration and creativity. Lincoln is sweeping top national rankings which are validating its success, yet its charming character and modesty still rings true.

The highly educated workforce in Lincoln holds more degrees than the national average. The city's several institutions of higher learning and the thriving business community attract professionals in education, technology, health care, government, banking and insurance. Located within a day's drive of much of the Midwest, Lincoln connects globally through an international airport only 50 miles away, in Omaha. Many of these professionals come to Lincoln for the access to excellent schools, public and private.

Nebraska has a long-standing commitment to settling refugees from around the world, and Lincoln has been declared a refugee-friendly city for close to fifty years. According to federal government data, Nebraska led the nation in resettling the most refugees per capita in 2016. Nebraska is a strong draw for refugees because of its strong economy with accessibility to jobs in local industries. As of 2010, students of Lincoln Public Schools speak over 100 languages, and about 90% of refugees come to the state to reunite with family.

Nebraska's rich culture and Lincoln's contribution to it are often taken for granted. The atmosphere is inviting and the community is keen to helping people reach their next goal. Those that live in Lincoln recognize there's a certain charm to the capital city that is found throughout the local arts scene, the booming restaurant industry and the relaxed pace of life. It has become a cultural hub that is curating greatness.

You don't have to leave the city to get back to nature. This bustling city still has room for open spaces with more than 125 parks. Getting around town is a breeze and the culture is geared toward getting outside, and the average commute is <18 minutes. Additional data, statistics, and fun facts can be found [here](#).

Candidates may apply by clicking the
APPLY NOW button below.

APPLY NOW

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email.

ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy, President and CEO of KEES and Alison Lewin, Project Director of KEES. Questions may be addressed to alewin@kees2success.com.

KEES is a retained executive search firm that builds transformative teams and leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.