

Agency for Change Podcast: Anne Brandt, Executive Director, Lincoln Littles

- Connect with Anne on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/anne-thompson-brandt-4b33b77/>
- Learn more about Lincoln Littles: <https://lincolnlittles.org/>

Anne Brandt:

Early care and education is an everyone issue.

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Kelley Peterson:

Giving an early start education has become a hot topic in recent years for good reason. While lawmakers debate over the best approach to offering more resources to young children, researchers have found that children who attend early childhood education have better social and emotional skills and have higher graduation rates, especially low-income areas. Hi everyone. This is Kelley Peterson, chief creative officer at KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change Podcast. Today's guest, Anne Brandt, is executive director at Lincoln Littles, an organization who knows the importance of early education and is advocating for change. The team at Lincoln Littles believes all children should have access to affordable, high quality, early care, and are taking great strides to making it happen. Anne, thanks so much for being here. I'm excited to learn more about the great work you're doing. Welcome to the podcast.

Anne Brandt:

Hi Kelley. I'm happy to be here.

Kelley Peterson:

Anne, Lincoln Littles has received quite a bit of press lately, but for our listeners who may not be familiar with your good work, can you tell us about your mission?

Anne Brandt:

Yes. Lincoln Littles' mission is for all children in Lincoln to have access to quality early care and education regardless of income, race or ethnicity.

Kelley Peterson:

What an amazing mission to have. Anne, in your expert opinion, why does early childhood even matter?

Anne Brandt:

Early childhood experiences matter because 90% of brain development occurs by the time a child enters kindergarten. And we know from research, children who have quality early experiences are more likely to graduate, they're more successful in the workforce and they're less likely to be incarcerated.

Kelley Peterson:

Wow. That means that it would just change the future a lot through early childhood development. So, there are a lot of myths out there. What is early childhood development anyway? And some people mix that. Oh, is it daycare, is it childcare? Is it early education? What's the difference?

Anne Brandt:

So, for those who are not in the field of early childhood education, the difference in semantics may not be significant. However, words do matter as you know, and the professionals who are caring for young children and in the field prefer childcare or early care and education because the emphasis is on the child rather than the time of day like in daycare. So most often I hear early care and education, and that is because you cannot care for a child without educating a child. And you also can't educate a child without caring for them.

Kelley Peterson:

I love that. So, you are so right. I'm a words lover and words do matter. When they would say, "Hey, what are you doing this workday?" I don't feel that there are workdays either. Constantly thinking about new things. So just like daycare, the workday, it's a 24/7 gig I think, and especially is a 24/7 gig when we're talking about caring for children. That's for sure.

Anne Brandt:

That's true.

Kelley Peterson:

So, what challenges does our community face in giving all families access to quality care and education?

Anne Brandt:

Well, the two biggest issues are affordability and quality. And so, they're the two biggest barriers to the mission of all children having the opportunity to attend a quality program. And in Lincoln, 74% of children under five have all parents in the workforce, which is higher than the national average. We have about 18,000 children under five in Lincoln. And so, if you think about 74% of that, I believe it's a little over 13,000 seats that we would need for those children, assuming that they're all going to attend a childcare center or a home provider rather than family friend care. Our license capacity is about 11,500. So, there is a gap there, but just because our license capacity is that amount doesn't mean that we actually have that many seats. And that's because the pandemic really affected the workforce in the... I mean, we know it affected the workforce everywhere, but this industry of childcare, it really has taken a nosedive since the pandemic. And so, we don't necessarily have that capacity of 11,500 because we don't have the people...

License regulations, you have to have a certain ratio of adults versus children. And so, we don't necessarily have that currently. And so, our capacity is even lower than that.

Additionally, I will just say, so that's just thinking about spots and the quality of care. We know that we can't have quality without professionals who are able to deliver that quality and you need to have that

consistent relationship with a caregiver is what really matters for children. And so that's been in jeopardy as well, is there's people that aren't staying in the field. Also, affordability is a barrier because the childcare business model is primarily parent pay and costs are high due to those low ratios I mentioned. But also, the average childcare costs are between \$10-12,000 a year per child. And sometimes it's not unusual for those costs to even be as high as \$17,000 depending on where you're going. And the area median income is about \$62,000 in Lincoln. And so, you can see why affordability is a barrier if you think about \$10-12,000 on average per year per child. And people have several children, often under five.

Furthermore, also remember that parents are not usually at the peak of their earning power when their children are young, yet they're shelling out tuition costs that are similar to college tuition. The larger issue there is that we need public funding. Children no longer stay home with their parents. Most children don't stay home with their parents until they're five and then go to school in our school system of K-12. We really need to think about what's happening with children before they get to public school. And that's why we really need a public funding stream to be able to help parents with the high costs of care.

Kelley Peterson:

Thank you for putting together such simple comparisons to understand the gaps. That was very eye-opening, just even the numbers of children in Lincoln and the licenses and that there is a gap there. And then thinking about the pocketbook gaps of average salary. And then if you spend upwards of \$12-17,000, there's a big gap in that pocketbook for sure. And parents aren't staying at home as much, having both working parents. So, I can see how that that's extremely important. I also sit on a board... when you said people are getting out of this sector of work, so the early childhood providers are switching careers completely. Do you see that in teachers as well? I know I sit on a board and that's definitely the case for therapists, whether that be mental health or behavioral health providers.

Anne Brandt:

Yes, Lincoln Littles, and it would be about a year ago now, we conducted a survey with the workforce, the childcare workforce, to determine what the waiting list looked like. Were people staying in the field? We knew they weren't, so what were the reasons that they were leaving? And we kind of had an idea of why they were leaving, but we wanted numbers. And so we did conduct a survey of the childcare centers in town, which there's about 115 centers and about 30% of those responded. And we found out that the reason that people are leaving mainly is because of low pay. So, an average pay for a childcare employee in Lincoln might be around \$11 an hour. And we know that the living wage is higher than that. And then also lack of benefits. So again, it's just kind of a broken system that they're not able to receive higher pay or benefits in many cases.

However, there are some areas where you can receive those things, but by and large, the childcare providers are... The business model is the profit margin is very thin just because of the way that it's designed, and the lack of public funding injected into that as opposed to public schools. And so, I think we knew that. We knew pay and benefits were an issue, but the other thing that we found out is just burnout. This was a precarious situation before the pandemic and then the pandemic with all the extra stress really caused people to leave and maybe go find something else to do because there were so many other opportunities. And unfortunately, you can make more money doing almost anything than working in a childcare center, I'm sorry to say. So, we need to make sure that that's part of why we exist, is to elevate, elevate the conversation, elevate the field, and really get people to understand why this

matters to a community and to the children and family and businesses and community, why they would benefit from better systems.

Kelley Peterson:

So, we started just there talking about a lot of tough challenges. Let's switch gears and talk about the good stuff because you are doing amazing things. And I don't mean to make light at all of those challenges, or those barriers and we need to know that they exist in the community, but Lincoln Littles is doing some really extraordinary things. So how is Lincoln Littles raising opportunities for all children, ensuring they are ready for school and lifelong learning?

Anne Brandt:

We focus on four main areas of our strategic plan and they're: affordability, quality, community and business engagement, and policy. So, I'll give you just an example or two in each area. One thing that we do in regard to affordability is we have a tuition assistance program, and we are just about ready to launch into the fifth year of allocating funds to childcare providers who then allocate funds to parents who fall in the gap. And so those are people who make too much to receive childcare subsidy, but they don't make enough to afford these high costs we're talking about. And so, this community is amazing and we have in partnership, been able to raise funds with... Lincoln Community Foundation has helped spearhead that fundraising to be able to grant out those funds to 28 different childcare centers we're currently working with. And it really makes a difference. We get phone calls weekly from parents who receive these funds to defray the cost of their childcare.

So, it's just a huge opportunity for people in Lincoln to be able to access those funds. But it's really just a temporary solution for a larger problem, which I've talked about before, which is that need for that public funding for these early years. And so, we're really happy to be able to do that. We've raised around \$5 million over the last five years for those gap families to be able to go to work and do what they need to do. And our average allocation to a family is about \$2,300 a year. So that's what I think is interesting. It's not like it's a full ride to childcare, it's just on average about \$2,300 per child, but that really makes a difference to a family.

In regard to quality, we have many quality initiatives because we want the utmost quality in childcare centers so that all children can receive that quality care. And so, Suzanne Schneider, the associate director of Lincoln Littles, works primarily in this area of our strategic plan. She was a childcare provider director for 30 years and she knows everything there is to know. She has developed a peer mentoring program where she's working with... She's leading childcare provider directors who are seasoned, have been in the business for a long time, pairing them with new directors to help just shepherd them through the challenges that might come up in whether it be in the business model or working with staff, curriculum, whatever it may be. She also has put together just a collaboration of providers monthly where they can hop on a call and get any kind of information they need or support or they find people who maybe are wanting to work on the same things and they're able to collaborate in the community, which really didn't happen before.

Childcare providers were sort of separate and maybe even competing a little bit for kids, but really they're now collaborating, which I know has been huge for the childcare community. And then we also are working on childcare improvement grants where we applied for funding through the county, and we received funding to be able to help eight different childcare centers in high poverty areas serving diverse children to just help with physical improvements of their building. Just to help with that aesthetic of when children come in having an inviting place to be. Often there may be centers that are taking high numbers of subsidy children and so they maybe are taking a loss on that subsidy reimbursement rate.

And it's harder to make those improvements, especially during the pandemic. We're really excited and you can look for some articles coming out about those centers in their before and after pictures and things like that in the future.

And then I guess I'll move on to community engagement. That's really what we do on a daily basis, just what I'm doing right now, engaging the community. We've been around for three and a half years and we're just wanting the community to know what it is that we do. And I'm noticing when I'm out and about and I mention what I do, people now say, "Oh yeah, Lincoln Littles," and they are aware of what we are doing. And that wasn't the case of course three years ago. So, we like to let the community know why early childhood is a hot topic and what we're doing to help the community.

And then policy, ultimately policy change and systems change is what is necessary. We work both locally and statewide to influence policy change that would make a difference for the field, parents and children. I just want to highlight one local example, just to make it tangible for people. There's a standard response protocol that the school system uses when unfortunately, there's an intruder or danger in the neighborhood. They have a system and common language that they use to proceed if that happens. And childcare did not have that kind of system. And so, we've partnered with Lincoln Police Department and the health department and the public school system to implement the same program into childcare centers so that if there is danger in a neighborhood or an intruder, they have a protocol that is the same as Lincoln Public Schools. And we have a text alert system where we can keep the childcare community aware of what's happening in the community in partnership with the police department.

And so that's just an example of something that didn't exist, that now exists and it's really cutting edge in the nation. It's not happening really in other places. We're hearing from other states that are calling us and saying, "We've heard about this program, we'd like to know more about it, and we'd like to implement it where we are. That's an example of just what we're trying to change overall to help the system work better.

Kelley Peterson:

Absolutely, incredible work that you're doing. My question of the day is going to be when do you sleep? I was taking some side notes and I can't even write fast enough of all of the incredible work that you're doing.

Anne Brandt:

Yeah. I mean, the great news I will tell you is on Sundays I never feel sad that I have to go to work on Monday. I always feel excited that I get to go to work on Monday just because every day is different and we are doing work that really matters and is making a difference. That's the exciting part.

Kelley Peterson:

It sure is. It's been a while, a long while, but I remember how expensive early childcare can be and how hard it is to find, especially having twins. How is Lincoln Littles partnering with employers to come up with innovative ways to help working parents?

Anne Brandt:

So, Lincoln Littles and First Five Nebraska, which is an early childhood policy agency here, located in Lincoln, but they're statewide. We launched an employer engagement initiative last fall to help employers seek ways to retain, recruit and support employees with childcare needs. And it's a three-pronged approach. First we connect with the businesses and listen to their needs, devise and conduct a

survey and find out how many staff they have with children under five, difficulties that they're seeing in retainment or recruitment. And then we work to find solutions for the data received through the survey and then help implement strategies by connecting the businesses to resources needed.

Some examples of solutions might be reducing costs through scholarships, maybe onsite childcare. I know here in Lincoln, Hudl has partnered with Primrose Preschool to offer that on their main level to their staff. Might be a near site partnership. I know TMCO, Total Metal Manufacturing Company, they have been partnering for years with a local childcare center to reserve spots for their staff and they're subsidizing the cost of some of those costs of care.

So, there's really a multitude of ways that you can support children and families that work for you. And the interesting thing about this work is that three and a half years ago, this was in the job description, was to work with local businesses to increase opportunities for staff and businesses to be able to have access to high quality early care and education. And I was scratching my head thinking, "Okay, that will just be interesting. I got to really think about that."

And then in comes the pandemic and suddenly we have businesses reaching out to us because of the way the world has changed and the way that people work and the general workforce and low unemployment rates that we really do have businesses coming to us saying, "We want to help our families be the best that they can be." And of course, it helps their bottom line because it costs money to retrain people and rehire people. And so, it's really a great time to be able to help businesses understand how they can support their employees.

Kelley Peterson:

So, you're saying your job description was ahead of its time? You didn't even know it.

Anne Brandt:

Yes, it was. I mean, I don't think anybody would've wanted a pandemic to make that happen.

Kelley Peterson:

No, no.

Anne Brandt:

Of course, that is something that is positive about the pandemic, is it really changed people's perspectives on lots of different things.

Kelley Peterson:

Absolutely. I do think that there's a lot of silver linings to it, and I loved this podcast in particular for talking about some of those because they're rising to the top of, we wouldn't even have gotten this far possibly with business engagement for early childhood if it wasn't for it.

Anne Brandt:

Well, and I also just think you really cannot... I'm a newspaper reader, I love to seek information and you really can't go a single day without there being an article about the importance of early childhood and just the entire system and what we can do to change it. Every day, there is an article in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Lincoln Journal Star, you name it, it is in the news.

Kelley Peterson:

So, I think that being a hot topic and being in the news, but just Lincoln Littles in general was before its time. And so, it's been three and a half years. And one of my favorite things is to hear when talking with nonprofits is their founding stories. Can you share more about how and why Lincoln Littles came to be?

Anne Brandt:

Yes. So, in 2014, the Lincoln Community Foundation and the Nebraska Public Policy Center came together for Vital Signs. They did a community survey on, we've got a lot of people prospering in Lincoln, but we have a lot of people not prospering. Where are areas that we can focus upon to help improve the numbers of people who are prospering in Lincoln? Which, of course, will just improve our entire community. From Vital Signs, Prosper Lincoln came to be, and there were certain areas of focus and early childhood bubbled up to the top of one area that if we hired people to wake up every day to think about how to improve from a systems level, because of course, we have people waking up every day doing this work all over the community, and that's never been different. But how can we move the needle collectively on early childhood?

From that, Michelle Suarez did the work 2017 to 2020. She was an early childhood developer and really laid the groundwork and paved the way for this early childhood work. And then in 2020 she retired, and I was hired and then Suzanne Schneider, associate director, was hired one week after I was to wake up every day and work on these big, big idea systems change for early childhood. And so that's how it all began. Barb Bartle was president of Lincoln Community Foundation at the time, and I appreciate her vision and the opportunity to be able to do this work because we know that early childhood really is the foundation for everything else. Without strong experiences from zero to five, it's really difficult. You can overcome maybe less than favorable experiences during that time, but it's difficult. It's more difficult. So, it's an easy place to start, is to just ensure... It's not easy, but it makes sense to start in early childhood so that everybody, you can even that playing field.

Kelley Peterson:

So, you just said three of my most favorite community initiatives and brands. And those three are: Lincoln Vital Signs, Prosper Lincoln and Barb Bartle. She definitely has a brand and a legacy and she's still at it, so that is great. But those two initiatives that spearheaded Lincoln Littles in such a big way and KidGlov being involved in those projects, it's been really great to see that work and how far it's come to create things like Lincoln Littles.

Anne, I know we talked about great initiatives, we talked about great people and brands that were part of this. I know you don't do this work alone. Can you tell me about the passionate people on your team?

Anne Brandt:

Yes. As I mentioned before, I think it was January 7th, 2020, I began this work and then one week later I was lucky enough to have Suzanne Schneider join me to do this work. And Suzanne really was involved in a lot of this work in the first phases with Michelle Suarez as part of the Lincoln Early Childhood Network that was developed by a group of people with Michelle's leadership. And Suzanne was part of that group. She was a director of a childcare center, has been in the field of early childhood for 30 years in both California and in Nebraska. And she really is just an incredible person to work with. She already had relationships with the childcare providers and the work that she does is directly with the childcare providers, helping them with improved quality, being a sounding board. I mean, there's really nothing that I can think of that Suzanne doesn't know how to do when it comes to technical work with the childcare field.

She knows everything there is to know about details and how to improve quality. She led a top-rated quality childcare center before she started doing this work. She worked in many volunteer positions in the early childhood field during that time. And so, it really has made a difference having somebody with early childhood experience that can really get in there and understand what the needs are and how to support the childcare community. Suzanne is just a great partner. She and I, because of the workforce survey I mentioned earlier that we did last year, we determined that we needed to hire somebody to help the childcare workforce specifically.

And so, we wrote some grants last year and we are lucky to be grant funded by Woods Charitable Fund and Community Health Endowment and Buffet to be able to hire Lameakia Collier, who is our new wellness workforce navigator. She started about two months ago. She comes to us from the early childhood department at LPS, and she is hired specifically to support the early childhood workforce with retainment and recruitment by developing solutions, through exploring wellness needs of staff, and then also designing pathways to encourage people to do this important work. And I want to also say and highlight that we were just awarded a Nebraska Department of Labor grant to incentivize 50 people to work in the early care and education field who will then looking maybe at people with children who need help with their childcare bill. We can't pay them more, but what we can do is help them with part of their childcare bill with this grant that we received from the Department of Labor.

So, I just want to say things are in the works as far as developing a pathway for people to enter the field. Be looking for communication from Lincoln Littles about that because that will be happening soon here. And then Lameakia is also going to be working on solutions to just support the wellness needs of the childcare workforce. It's tough work and it's been a tough three years. And so, we want to find out for you who have stayed in the field, what can we do to support you and support your needs so that you'll remain in the field because it's such important work.

Kelley Peterson:

I love that. I'm curious, we talked about the love of words and wellness workforce navigator. I'm just curious of where that came from and are there other wellness workforce navigators? That title, does that exist in other communities?

Anne Brandt:

I don't know if it does, but it really came down to just being transparent about what we want to do accomplish, which is to support the workforce, but not just the nuts and bolts of what you would normally think about with that, but we really want to think about wellness because you really can't take care of children and do it really well on a daily basis if you yourself are not being taken care of. And we know that they're not paid what they should be paid because of the current way things are. And we want to make sure that we can support them in other ways. So, if we can't fix that, we're... Ultimately we want to fix that problem of pay, but in the meantime, what can we do to support them as individuals so that they feel seen, they feel valued for the important work that they're doing for many of us on a daily basis.

Kelley Peterson:

I was at a trustees meeting with an organization that is also child-serving in Washington, and they put it so great. It was, you need to put your oxygen mask on first. And so definitely that wellness workforce navigator is helping those workers do just that. So, they can do that first and then help the kids, because if they don't, they're not going to be able to. So love that.

Let's switch gears and talk about you for a bit. What made you interested in this line of work?

Anne Brandt:

Two things. I mean, I have lived in Lincoln my whole life. Doing work that is so community oriented was something that was very interesting to me. Secondly, my background is education. I worked for Lincoln Public Schools for 18 years in a multitude of different positions. I started out as a middle school reading teacher and I was teaching children who were in middle school, but they were reading below a third grade level. And I know for a fact that in many respects it's related directly to what was happening in those children's lives in the first five years. And then I went to teach kindergarten after that. And again, I had students coming to me that had such a disparity in how they came to school. And so that was another just interest of mine, is just thinking about "why is that?". And again, it's directly related to what's happened or has not happened in those first five years of those children's lives.

I had many other positions while at LPS, but I think those highlight what I'm talking about here. Is that between being able to work deeper in the community with all the different partnerships that we have with Lincoln Littles and then make a change, try and make a systems-wide change to how things operate for early childhood and to get that to every child in Lincoln was really interesting to me because I just tried to think about how different it would be if every child had opportunities to be able to arrive at kindergarten with less disparity than I saw when I was teaching kindergarten. So those were really probably... I love Lincoln. I wanted to be able... We were almost empty nesters when I began this work. And so, I have a renewed ability, I think, to be able to put my all into something since my children are often doing their thing. And so, it was great timing and it really just... I think my past experiences set me up for this work.

Kelley Peterson:

I think there's probably nothing like being a kindergarten teacher and seeing the gaps in just individual children who show up ready and those that lack in all kinds of supports when they arrive and they're all arriving at that same time. My daughter-in-law also taught reading at a middle school level. And so those are students who need help, and you can just see they may continually need help and they're at that middle school age. And so, to hit the ground running in high school and not being able to read when you get there is a big struggle. So, hats off to all of the teachers in the world.

Anne Brandt:

Yeah. And the research really shows that if you're not reading at grade level by third grade, usually the gap widens.

Kelley Peterson:

Yes. So, by the time it hits you and you're in middle school getting ready to go to high school, real tough. So, I'm inspired by words and in inspirational quotes. Anne, could you give us a few of your own words of wisdom for our listeners?

Anne Brandt:

This was a little difficult for me to think about as I was thinking about this interview, but yet I know my children would say I'm constantly providing words of wisdom to them. And I think they could probably quote quite a long list. In addition, when I left LPS, my colleagues prepared a box of Anne-isms and read each one of them to me over lunch. So, I know I must spout words of wisdom all the time, but after careful thought, my quote would be, "Curiosity invites opportunity."

And the reason that I would say that is just that I've always been curious, and I do believe it leads to opportunities. I can remember my grandfather inviting his grandkids out to eat one by one periodically

throughout a year just to spend time with us, but also, he did have an agenda. And he had a curious mind and he wanted to stay in the know. And so, he would always have a list of things he wanted to ask us about in regards to new trends in music. I remember when the internet was just coming out, he wanted to know what our thoughts were on that, what kind of difference we thought it would make in the world. And so, I really think I admire his curiosity all the way up until 90. I mean, he was curious all the time. And I tend to be very curious and loved to research things and talk to people and find out about new things. And so, I just really think curiosity invites opportunity.

Kelley Peterson:

Well, I really appreciate you sharing that Anne-ism, and I'm sure that there were multitude of them that live on to this day.

Here's an interesting research item. I also learned that if you're playing two truths in a lie, you may use meeting Bono and writing backwards in a wood-paneled station wagon as your truths. Tell me about that.

Anne Brandt:

Well, the wood-paneled station wagon, all I can think is that maybe that comes from our growing up together, our childhood, but you probably rode backwards in a wood-paneled station wagon with me since I had the pleasure of growing up with you on the same street. But the meeting Bono, Bono was here December 1st, 2002, for the E.N. Thompson Forum, raising money for Sub-Saharan orphans. And I mentioned my grandfather just a minute ago, and you mentioned as well him. He actually started that forum years ago, and he happened to be in the hospital in his last days and had to watch Bono from his hospital room. But he couldn't have been more thrilled and excited that we were all going to see Bono at the forum. And we got to tell him why Bono was so amazing and because he didn't quite get it the way that we got it. And so again, there goes his curiosity, wanting to know why Bono is so fabulous.

We got to go to a reception with Bono. And all I can think about is while we were hanging out with Bono, who I think the Joshua Tree album for being in high school was one of my top albums that I listened to. And so, sitting there with Bono, my husband and I were starstruck. I mean, we couldn't even think of anything to say. And I said it was in 2002. So, we have twins that were born in 2001. So, there we are sitting with Bono and my mom and my husband and I are sitting there and we can't think of anything to say to him except to have him sign a napkin. And my mother leans over and says, "Bono, Anne and Brad have twins." And my husband and I were like, "What?" I mean, he doesn't care if we have twins, but I appreciated my mother not being starstruck because to her, she didn't really understand the significance of having Bono sitting there with you at the table. So, she's just shooting the breeze about our kids. So, it all comes back to early childhood talking about the babies with Bono.

Kelley Peterson:

That is the best story. I love that. And for our listeners who would like to learn more about Lincoln Littles and how they can find you, how would you tell them?

Anne Brandt:

Well, we have a website, which is lincolnlittles.org. We have social media presence. I should have mentioned by the way that we also have Kylie Muller, who is our intern extraordinaire from the university who does all of our social media. And she's been with us for about a year and a half. And she is just amazing. Helps us with our graphic design and things like that. So, we are on Instagram and Facebook, and then we have our website.

Kelley Peterson:

I know I follow you on Facebook, but I'm going to have to get on Instagram. I'm not sure if I'm following you on Instagram or not. I better get on it.

Anne Brandt:

Do it.

Kelley Peterson:

Or maybe I am. I'll double check.

Anne Brandt:

Okay.

Kelley Peterson:

As we wrap up our time together today, what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work you're doing?

Anne Brandt:

Early care and education is an everyone issue. Whether you have young children or not, the extent to which we provide opportunities for all children to have a strong start is the extent to which we have a prosperous community. Get involved where you can when it comes to early childhood efforts. And I really think Lincoln already has done so, but there's so much more work to do. We're fortunate to live here in Lincoln where we have such a supportive community.

Kelley Peterson:

We are so fortunate, and I fully believe that the world needs more change makers like you. Thank you for taking the time to share with us today.

Anne Brandt:

Thank you for having me.

Kelley Peterson:

You bet.

Announcer:

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.