The annual Caring for Children Conference will be held on Saturday, March 27.

The conference, which is sponsored by the High Plains Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership, is set for McCook Community College from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Central Time.

The keynote speaker will be Michelle Rupiper, director of the Ruth Staples Child Development Laboratory at UNL.

Rupiper's keynote presentation is entitled "These Kids Are Driving Me Crazy! Promoting Positive Behavior in Young Children." She will also do three break-out sessions: "Supporting Children's Learning and Behavior," "Taking Care of You," and "Ideas to Improve Your Learning Environment."

Other conference presenters include Extension Educator Mary Kay Warner, Jody Crocker from McCook Public Library, Betty Vette of Family Service Childcare Food Program, Ashley Kurkowski and Sherri Goff from McCook YMCA after school program, former child care center director Brenda Wilson-Haag, speech/language pathologist Kim Van Pelt, McCook Police Department Detective Larry Kinne and Red Willow Chief Deputy Alan Kotschwar, certified yoga instructor Gerri Gardine, Tina Cummins from McCook Head Start, Nate Jensen from Turning Point Family Services, and discussion panel members Nikki Banzhaf from McCook Head Start, Ashley Kurksowski, Betty Vette, child care inspection specialist Vona Koch, and child care providers Jackie Grassia and Marisa Kunneman.

Nate Jensen will provide an inspirational closing session entitled "What Difference Does It Make Anyway?" Door prizes will be given out after the closing session.

The Caring for Children Conference is for anyone who is interested in children. The conference is sponsored by these members of the High Plains Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership: Family Resource Center, McCook Community College, Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska Head Start, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, ESU 16, ESU 15, McCook Public Library, Family Services Child Care Food Program, University

of Nebraska Lincoln Extension, Red Willow County Health Department, SouthWest Early Intervention Team, Nebraska Educational Assistive Technology, and Southwest Public Schools.

The conference is funded in part by a grant from federal and/or state funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Education.

For more information, call Lori Poppe at 308-284-8481.

To register for the conference, call Carol Stensvad at 308-345-8122 or toll-free 800-658-4348 EXT 8122.