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## FY03 Early Childhood Focus

The 79<sup>th</sup> Iowa General Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> session is underway. During the Governor's Condition of the State address he shared a primary focus on early childhood issues. The Governor released the specifics of his budget recommendations. The budget book is posted at [http://www.state.ia.us/governor/agenda/budget\\_in\\_brief/index.html](http://www.state.ia.us/governor/agenda/budget_in_brief/index.html). It was exciting to hear the Governor mention building on "the success of Community Empowerment."

His budget recommendation for fiscal year 03 for school ready grants is \$15.2 million, which is only slightly less than last year's \$15.8 million. This shows the Governor's strong support and commitment to early childhood.

Here's what the budget book says, "Provide Comprehensive and Coordinated Support of Children from Birth through Age Five and Support their Families to Ensure a Safe and Healthy Environment and Early Childhood Learning.

### Children First Initiatives

#### 1. First Lady's literacy initiatives

Through First Lady Christie Vilsack's literacy efforts, this initiative supports family and community literacy. It was developed to strengthen communities

families, and children through reading, storytelling, and involvement with libraries. Currently, 40 communities are participating in Iowa Stories. As part of Iowa Stories, every child entering kindergarten in September 2002 will receive the book I is for Iowa.

#### 2. Children's Cabinet

Iowa's early childhood health and education programs are currently spread throughout several state departments. To ensure a focus on maintaining high-quality services for young children and their families, Governor Vilsack and Lt. Governor Pederson recommend the creation of Policy and Coordination Cabinet for Early Childhood. This Children's Cabinet will facilitate greater public awareness and coordinate Iowa's early care and education system of services.

#### 3. Children First Endowment

The Endowment will be funded by the state's general fund ending balance after the reserve funds are filled. Interest revenue from the Endowment will be used for early childhood education initiatives.

#### 4. Community Empowerment

Continue to provide support for the local Community Empowerment activities. Local boards coordinate early care, health, and education activities and build an integrated early care, health and education system for children birth through age five and their families.

## Upcoming Events

### Empowerment Board Meeting Schedule

April 5, 2002  
July 12, 2002  
October 4, 2002  
*Urbandale Public Library,  
Urbandale, IA*

### Empowerment Advisory Council Meetings

March 14, 2002  
June 13, 2002  
September 12, 2002  
*Urbandale Public Library,  
Urbandale, IA*

### Contact/Coordinator Meetings

February 27, 2002  
May 15, 2002  
September 18, 2002  
*Ames Public Library, Ames, IA*

## HOT OFF THE PRESS! Iowa Community Empowerment 2001 Annual Report

The 2001 Iowa Community Empowerment Annual Report is now available on the state website, [www.empowerment.state.ia.us](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us). From the home page, click on Annual Report in the bottom left-hand corner. Items of interest include a section on Achieving

Results, Collaboration, Advocacy as well as a showcase report from each of the 58 empowerment areas.

## COMMON RESULTS LANGUAGE FRAMEWORK\* A Joint Legislative Fiscal Bureau/Department of Management/Empowerment Project

### Background:

- Because of the commitment to results-oriented government in Iowa, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau and the Department of Management convened a team to develop a common results language framework. Representatives from Iowa State University Extension and Empowerment were part of the team.
- The strategy calls for achieving the results-based framework and common terminology first within the empowerment context. Then using a successful experience to spread the model across the executive and legislative branches.
- The Iowa Empowerment Board approved the terminology at its April 14, 2000 meeting.
- Mark Friedman, through the AE Casey Foundation, met with the team and empowerment representatives and indicated support for the terminology with the addition of some "plain English" descriptions which were incorporated.

1. Demand  
Definition: the estimated level of need for any program, activity, or service.

What is the program, activity or service and who needs it?  
Demographic information may be used to document needs and to describe populations with needs.

2. Result  
Definition: the effect desired for Iowans.

"Results" can be stated in different degrees of specificity. "Safe Iowans" is an example of a broadly stated result. "Safe Iowans" describes an effect desired for Iowans but is too broad to measure or to guide decision making. If a department, division, or work unit were asked to make Iowans "safer," they would need more policy guidance before knowing what to do. Should they make roads safer? Work to keep muggers off the streets? Reduce the incidences of domestic violence? Safer from what?

Policymakers should state the specific results they want to see achieved so those charged with implementing policy can suggest measures, identify strategies, and propose initiatives. In the example above, one possible specific result is "highways free of alcohol-related accidents."

### Empowerment results for Iowans:

- *Healthy Children*
- *Children Ready to Succeed in School*
- *Safe and Nurturing Families*
- *Safe and Supportive Communities*
- *Secure and Nurturing Childcare Environments*

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## The Wallace House Foundation

The Wallace House Foundation commemorates the remarkable influences of the Wallace family in Iowa, the nation, and the world. In 1991, the Foundation preserved and rebuilt the home of the first Henry Wallace as a historical and interpretive center, and currently promotes discussion of and education about current issues in agriculture, conservation, democracy, and the quality of life.

The Foundation is working to build support for the use of the study circles model as an effective approach to problem solving and community building, and are available to work with organizations, coalitions, and individuals throughout the state. Utilizing this model since 1994, the Foundation works to assist citizens at the grassroots level to establish common values, prioritize issues, define resources, and take action on any given issue or concern.

Through guided small group participation, the study circles process helps individuals to learn more about existing resources, and encourages community partnerships for more effective action. In recent years, the Foundation has assisted numerous organizations, agencies, and individuals to improve problem solving and community building skills in the areas of agriculture and land use, watershed management, education, community development, population diversity, and immigration.

To learn more about the current work and mission of the Wallace House Foundation, please visit their website at [www.wallace.org](http://www.wallace.org), or call 515-243-7063.

## Meet State Empowerment Board Member



**Rebecca Burgart**

Rebecca Burgart has been employed at Iowa Western Community College (IWCC) since 1974. Becky began as a secondary vocational child care instructor. While at IWCC, she has held many positions including child development and lab school instructor, program coordinator, lab school director, department chair, and associate dean. Becky is currently the Dean of the Health/Sport Science division.

Becky has been married to Jim for 27 years. They have 3 sons, Jon 22, Jason 20 and Justin 18.

Becky is a graduate from Iowa State University, receiving her degree in Child Development in 1974. She earned her masters degree from Iowa State in 1993 in Family and Consumer Science Education.

The majority of Becky’s career life has involved working with young children and their families in some way. She also finds that many of the early childhood principles apply to other areas of her life as well.

Becky’s various awards and accomplishments include the Teaching

Excellence Award from the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), President’s Outstanding Service Award, and Who’s Who among America’s Teachers.

Professional organizations include SWIAEYC, MWAEYC, NAEYC (she has served on both local and state boards & Phi Delta Kappa. Becky serves as a board member for the Lewis Central Community School District. She is also a trustee on the Lewis Central Educational Foundation Board. She serves on the Pottawattamie County Empowerment Board as well as the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce child care task force. Becky comments about her community involvement, “It is exciting to see business and the community becoming more involved with and realizing the importance of early childhood issues.”

Becky shares these thoughts about serving on the Empowerment Board and her involvement with early childhood, “Early childhood is such an important time in an individual’s life, it sets the foundation for everything that comes later. I have enjoyed being on the State Empowerment Board and am amazed at all of the great things that are happening in Iowa for young children and their families. Communities are working together to set priorities and develop initiatives that support families. Empowerment has been the vehicle to help that happen.”



## What To Do After the *hawk-i* Coordination Meeting

The holiday season is over, everyone is back to work, and it's time to follow-up on the all the plans that were made in 2001. If your community held a *hawk-i* coordination meeting, now is the time to focus on the priority issues that emerged.

Experience, surveys, and our Covering Kids State Coalition work show that one of the foremost outreach resources for *hawk-i* is a school nurse. Not only are school nurses in contact with children every day, they understand thoroughly how children and families are affected when they lack health insurance. Partnering with your communities' school nurses may prove to be the most time-effective outreach strategy for your area.

Based on a 2001 statewide survey of school nurses, responses indicated:

- School nurses list "lack of health insurance" in the top three Prominent Health Issues in Schools.
- School nurses recommend linking *hawk-i* and Free and Reduced Lunch applications.
- If supplied to them, school nurses will distribute a newsletter about *hawk-i* to parents.
- School nurses recommend including *hawk-i* inserts with report cards and other school mailings.

Like many of us, school nurses have limited time to work on outreach even for something as valuable as *hawk-i*. With a community's support, however, the work is spread out and nurses are supplied with the resources they need. When you approach your school nurses

to get involved in outreach be prepared to:

- Supply the nurse with all available outreach materials.
- Give them a list of resource persons.
- Promise them ongoing contact with your community *hawk-i* outreach worker.
- Follow-up with a Certificate of Appreciation to display at the school.

For questions or comments about this article, contact Sonni Vierling at (515) 281-4516 or [svierlin@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:svierlin@idph.state.ia.us).



## Parenting Education Institute coming Fall 2002!

Iowa State University Extension is offering a series of ten in-depth training modules for parent educators in Iowa via a *Parenting Education Institute* beginning Fall 2002. The *Parenting Education Institute* will be held at various locations in Iowa throughout next year. The overall goal of the institute is to strengthen the core competencies of parent educators (as defined by the National Council on Family Relations and other organizations) that will lead to enhanced services and better outcomes for families.

Each training module will consist of approximately five hours of face-to-face interactive learning in a group setting. Participants will have opportunities to become aware of research and theory applicable to parent education and develop and practice skills. There will also be one hour of on-line learning to

reinforce and extend learning that took place in the group setting. Individuals who complete eight or more of the modules will be eligible to receive certification by Iowa State University as a Parent Educator. ISU is planning on offering continuing education, undergraduate and graduate credits for participation in the series. Participant fees will range between \$65 - \$75 per module or \$500 for the series of ten modules.

Topics covered in the modules include:

- The Journey of Parenting Education
- A Strengths-based Approach to Parenting Education
- Cultural Perspectives on Parenting
- Child and Parent Development
- Guiding, nurturing, and motivating children
- Parenting with Special Challenges
- Pulling it together: Designing, Marketing, Implementing and Evaluating Local Parenting Education Efforts
- Parent Learning in Small Groups
- Developing Social Support Networks and Advocacy
- Building Support for Myself – Professional Development

For more information about the Parenting Education Institute contact Kimberly Greder, Assistant Professor and Family Life Extension State Specialist, Iowa State University, at 515-294-5906 or [kgreder@iastate.edu](mailto:kgreder@iastate.edu)

## Links to Empowerment Web sites

State:

[www.empowerment.state.ia.us](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us)

**Buchanan Delaware Fayette:**

[www.bdfempowerment.org](http://www.bdfempowerment.org)

**Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth Sioux:**

[www.northwestiowa.org](http://www.northwestiowa.org)

**Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell:**

[www.fmccom.org](http://www.fmccom.org)

**HAWC (Howard, Allamakee, Winneshiek):**

[www.HAWC-Iowa.com](http://www.HAWC-Iowa.com)

**Hardin**

<http://www.empowerhardin.com/>

**Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright**

[www.buildingfamilies.net](http://www.buildingfamilies.net)

**Linn:**

[www.linnempowerment.homestead.com/homepage.html](http://www.linnempowerment.homestead.com/homepage.html)

**Marshall:**

[www.youthandviolence.org](http://www.youthandviolence.org)

**Pocahontas, Calhoun and Webster:**

[www.linking-families.com](http://www.linking-families.com)

**Polk:**

[www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org](http://www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org)

**Scott:**

[www.scottcountypowerment.org/](http://www.scottcountypowerment.org/)

**Story:**

<http://www.storycountyfamily.org>

**Washington:**

[www.empowerwashington.org](http://www.empowerwashington.org)

**Woodbury:**

[www.siouxlandship.org](http://www.siouxlandship.org)

**Send us your web site address and we'll include it in the next newsletter.**

## MUSIC IMPACTS LEARNING

*From Making the Early Years Count: Enhancing Your Child's Brain Development. This article is by Vera Williams, Music for Everyone*

Of all the aspects regarding emerging brain research, music is the one most often misrepresented by the media. Listening to music (even Mozart) doesn't create geniuses. It is, however, associated with reducing stress and lowering anxiety.

Music instruction appears to play a positive role in a child's ability to learn in other areas. Research shows that children who study piano are better at spatial reasoning activities (e.g., putting

puzzles together). Spatial reasoning and understanding whole-part relationships are linked to many intellectual abilities.

The research regarding music instruction is still emerging but studies are linking it to improved skills in several areas including mathematics and reading. Studies are also finding that music instruction helps children develop an understanding of patterns that can be related to second language acquisition.

Tips for using music with children:

Use music to reduce anxiety. It is a great calming agent.

Offer children music instruction.

Teach children songs and sing with them. Singing increases endorphins in the blood stream. Endorphins act as memory fixatives and also help boost the immune system.

## Telling Your Story, An Evaluations Training

*(Community Story submitted by Cindy Duhrkopf, Partnerships 4 Families Empowerment Area, Audubon, Carroll, Greene and Guthrie Counties)*

As an Empowerment Area, Partnerships 4 Families was struggling with what do these words inputs, outputs and outcomes. When Technical Assistance money became available everyone wanted outcomes training to learn about these terms and how to report to the state. Thanks to two Iowa State University Extension (ISUE) Field Specialists we were able to offer our programs the training they wanted.

Mary Beth Kaufman and Pat Anderson, Field Specialists with ISUE in Southwest Iowa have developed a one-day training called "Telling Your Story, An Evaluation Training". By attending their trainings our programs have been able to:

- Learn about observable and measurable characteristics of their programs,

- Review existing evaluation and reporting tools
- Learn how to develop effective verbal and written stories that share program impact
- Learn about the different levels of evaluation and strive to report End Results.

Our area offered this training on two different dates in order to accommodate everyone's schedule and allow all programs to attend. We are happy that the majority of our programs attended along with many Decat funded programs. Comments at the end of the day varied from:

- I was able to re-look at our project and re-evaluate all the services we offer.
- I learned the difference between measurable numbers for indicators and measurable numbers for activities.
- Bennett's Hierarchy was the most valuable tool to learn about when working with outcomes, it made everything easier to understand.

As an area we are going to bring this training full circle as we sit down together in February to streamline our reporting process with a new quarterly report and collaborate on outcomes for Partnerships 4 Families and specific project outcomes. The end result will be a better informed Empowerment Area with all programs working together as a team for the betterment of the children and families in our four counties. Thanks to the training and use of Technical Assistance funding our Empowerment Area has been able to continue with this years mission to "Evaluate and Refocus".

Mary Beth and Pat will be offering their training in other SW Iowa Empowerment Areas this spring.

*(Thanks for sharing this article, Cindy)*

# Check out this Website!

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade.

Founded in 1926, NAEYC approaches its 75th anniversary with over 100,000 members and a national network of nearly 450 local, state, and regional Affiliates. NAEYC Affiliate Groups work to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education and to build public support for high quality early childhood programs.

Many resources are available from this website. Examples include position papers, brochures, books, posters, videos, etc. all encompassing Early Childhood issues.



# Teacher Perception Survey

During the 2001-2002 school year the Iowa Department of Education conducted the second teacher perception survey to address the empowerment indicator measuring the result, “Children ready to succeed in school.”

## Survey Design

The 2001-2002 Kindergarten Survey attempted to address issues of technical adequacy in two ways. First, this survey included four levels of readiness. Four levels of readiness were used to discriminate differences in the underlying attributes. Levels of Readiness include: rarely observable, sometimes observable, frequently observable, and consistently observable.

## Survey Process

The survey process was further systematized this year. A better system of tracking surveys sent and returned was implemented. In November as surveys were being returned, the AEA Early Childhood Network was engaged to remind principals or to attempt to correct inaccurate data.

Surveys were sent to accredited public and nonpublic schools this year to encompass a greater population of kindergarten students. The data was aggregated at the state level and desegregated by community empowerment area.

## Survey Results

The return rate for accredited public districts was 68% while accredited nonpublic buildings was 52%. This is lower than last years return rate of 95% for public districts. The usable data presented represents 52% of Iowa’s public school buildings and 54% of Iowa’s accredited nonpublic buildings. About 47% of Iowa’s kindergarten students both public and nonpublic are represented in these data. This compares to 72% of kindergarten

(continued from page 2)

### 3. Indicator

Definition: A measure that indirectly quantifies the achievement of a result.

*Indicators can be statewide indicators or local indicators.*

*Sometimes the statewide indicator and the local indicator can be the same thing such as the rate of immunization by age 2 as an indicator of Healthy Children at the statewide level and/or the local level.*

*Other local indicators of Healthy Children could be determined by the local empowerment area such as lead screening (which is not a statewide indicator).*

The next section on Performance Measures (program level outcomes) is significant for evaluating local outcomes and will be the focus of future technical assistance on evaluation.

### 4. Performance Measures

Definition: measures that assess a program, activity, or service. Performance measures include:

- a. **How much did we put in? (input measures):** The financial and non-financial resources invested, used, or spent for programs, activities or services.
- b. **How much did we do? (output measures):** A quantification of the programs, activities, or services produced or provided.
- c. **How well did we do it? (quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction measures):** Measures of the quality, speed, accuracy, cost, unit cost, or productivity associated with a given program, activity or service.
- d. **What difference did it make for the customer? (outcome measures):** The measurable effect on customers, clients, the environment, roads, etc., of a program, activity, or service.

students in public schools last year. Only 41 of the returned surveys were excluded due to data errors. Surveys with categories and representative behaviors that fell within a range of 97% to 103% were accepted. The results will be posted on the Empowerment web site by state and by each community empowerment area.

Conclusions regarding the data at the state level are limited. Conclusion at the community level may not be possible given the lower return rates. Since the survey is a beginning attempt to quantify several qualitative behaviors at the state level it may be valuable to look at ranges. Without predictability evidence of the instrument used, minimal conclusions can be drawn. It may be helpful to consider lower bound estimates or areas that appear to fall in the lower ranges of the total range. For example, it appears that teachers perceive about 35% of kindergarten children consistently exhibit the communication skills a teacher would expect. This falls below the motor skills category suggesting that teachers perceive 51% of the children consistently exhibit these behaviors. Cognitive skills were ranked at about 45%.

Another way to consider the results is similar to the manner in which the health care field reports data. Looking across the communication category, about 1 out of 10 children rarely exhibit the representative behaviors, 2 out of 10 have sometimes exhibit these behaviors and 3 out of 10 frequently exhibit these behaviors and 3 out of 10 consistently exhibit these representative behaviors. In general, the percentage of students ranked in the consistently observable category in communication, cognitive, and self management skills of children are rated lower by teachers than motor and social emotional skills.

**State Level Conclusions**

While the survey has been improved, it still does not address the validity, reliability or technical adequacy necessary to draw any definitive

conclusions. The data provides us with an opportunity to ask further questions and continue the dialogue about good assessment for young children. Thus general patterns may be discussed to help our state further clarify our assessment efforts in the future. If communication, cognition, and self management skills are rated lower than other areas on this survey this may be an indicator that would suggest a community empowerment area design or procure an assessment instrument to further clarify or verify these results. These are areas for further investigation and potentially align with other initiatives such as the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, Every Child Reads, children’s mental health issues or other statewide initiatives. Before drawing any definitive conclusions it is also important to consider the intent of the survey. It was not intended to make decisions about intervention about or for individual children. It was intended to be a subjective practically oriented glimpse at our system.

The survey results appear to support state level discussion around the following areas:

- 1) quality early care and education environments
- 2) early learning opportunities for young children
- 3) critical attributes of professional development
- 4) Every Child Reads training to support the communication and cognitive areas
- 5) focusing on results and data in order to support continuous improvement in the empowerment areas

**Future Activities**

The survey appears to emphasize the importance of the continued discussion around quality care for young children. The Department will continue to dialogue with Empowerment regarding this result as one measure of children ready to succeed in school. Potential methods of measuring these efforts will be explored further.

# Redesignation and Self Assessment

As Community Empowerment enters into its fourth year, a process for redesignation needed to be developed. Community Empowerment Areas are established in accordance with Section 28.5, Code of Iowa, 2001.



Jack Maletta, from ADLM (Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Monroe ) Empowerment Area

Designation of a community empowerment area and the creation of a community

empowerment area board are

subject to the approval of the Iowa Empowerment Board. The State Empowerment Team supports the community empowerment boards and their activities across the state. The team developed a self-evaluation tool.

This Redesignation Self Evaluation format was developed as a tool for community empowerment areas to measure their collaborative efforts and progress. The tool is an opportunity to measure the progress of the community empowerment area, guiding future planning and continuous improvement.

The redesignation self evaluation is to used in conjunction with the annual report. The tool is a partner-item and is used in conjunction



Chris Kivett-Berry and Terri Christofferson from Linn County Empowerment Area

with the annual report.

Initially the team worked with the first three community empowerment areas that were ready for redesignation in the fall of 2001, as a pilot project.



Beth Mohrfeld from Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area

Those areas, A.D.L.M. Empowerment Area (Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Monroe Counties); Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area; and Linn Co. Empowerment Area used this tool as a self-evaluation piece and submitted their evaluation along with their annual report. It was reviewed by the team. Visits to the empowerment areas were scheduled to discuss the information.

All three areas were redesignated at the Iowa Empowerment Board Meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

Redesignation for the remaining areas will be conducted in 2002 and 2003 with current designation extended to facilitate redesignation in conjunction with their annual reports and alignment with the state fiscal year.

## Parenting in Challenging Times PCA Iowa 21<sup>st</sup> Child Abuse Prevention Conference

For the twenty-first year, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa will be hosting Iowa's only statewide child abuse prevention conference on April 30- May 1, 2002 at the Marriott Downtown in Des Moines. Titled "Parenting in Challenging Times," the conference will focus on parenting and working with families in times of change. PCA Iowa expects approximately 400 individuals from

throughout the state to attend the two-day event.

The conference will offer two keynote addresses and 25 workshops for service providers and parents. Many of the sessions will address the challenges facing parents in times of change, grief, or loss. Presenters include both national and state experts.

### NEW FEATURE THIS YEAR

**Mandatory Reporter Training** will be available during the morning of the second day of the conference. This workshop will meet the state's requirement for training mandatory reporters of child abuse. The Marshall County Mandatory Reporter Training Team will present this two-hour training.

The full schedule of conference workshops will be ready in February 2002 and posted on PCA Iowa's web site ([www.pcaiow.org](http://www.pcaiow.org)). Those wanting registration materials may visit the web site or call PCA Iowa at 1-800 CHILDREN. The cost will be \$100 for up-to-date PCA Iowa members and \$125 for non-members.

## Other Activities

**Progress Through Partnerships  
Parent-Educator Connection  
Conference XVIII**  
February 10-12, 2002  
*Scheman Building, Ames, IA*

**Iowa Early Childhood Care and  
Education Congress**  
March 4 and 5, 2002  
Day on the Hill  
March 6, 2002  
*Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines, IA*

**Healthy Families America  
Training**  
March 19-22  
Des Moines  
For information, contact  
Joyce Poore Berkenes,  
(515) 244-2200

**Prevent Child Abuse  
Annual Conference**  
April 30-May 1, 2002  
*Downtown Marriott, Des Moines, IA*

**2001-2002 ECR,B-K Building  
Trainer Capacity**  
December 11, February 6, April 9  
*Public Library, Fort Dodge, IA*

December 4, February 5, April 16  
*Southwestern Comm. College,  
Creston, IA*

November 20, January 29, April 3  
*Coral Ridge Mall, Iowa City, IA*

December 13, February 7, April 18