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## **Families and Communities Together (FACT) Adair County Empowerment**

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### **Vision**

Families and Communities Together (FACT) will achieve a productive and sustainable future. The mission of the FACT Empowerment Area is to enhance the educational opportunities of children 0-5 years, to educate and support parents in the parenting role, enhance quality education at home, in child care and in the preschool setting, and provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.

The FACT Board plans to meet the needs of children 0-5 and their families while meeting the specific goals set by legislature. Priority will be given to enhancing the education of children 0-5, educate parents and support parenting skills, enhance quality education in preschool settings, and provide a safe environment for children.

Programs and activities were implemented and continued to address the following local indicators:

- Number of registered daycare providers
- Number of early care and preschool staff trained in Every Child Reads Birth to Kindergarten- completing the 15 hour program
- Number of quality books in collection of early childcare providers and preschools
- Number of Parent & Community member involvement in training efforts and use of the strategies of Every Child Reads
- Number of children ready to succeed in school
- Number of visits parents and children received education and support via Parents as Teachers
- Percentage of PAT children showing age appropriate behaviors on health/developmental screenings
- Number of provider homes available for Crisis Child Care, Provider homes meeting state requirements and receiving 6 hours of educational training
- Number of founded abuse/neglect cases

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- Parents as Teachers- a free home visitation program providing support and education to parents
- Crisis Child Care- free short-term child care to children whose families are experiencing a crisis or emergency and lack adequate child care for their children
- Every Child Reads- training to enhance children's literacy development
- Provider Training- training offered to early childhood child care providers to promote the quality and professionalism of a safe and healthy child care setting
- Preschool Enhancement, by providing educational materials, and other supplies and support.

This commitment will help achieve these results: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families, and safe and nurturing child care environments.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

A very big collaborative effort has taken place this past year that has generated a group designated as The Iowa Empowerment Child Connection and has involved up to 11 counties to come together and work for common goals.

A project we are really proud of is Preschool Enhancement for the FACT area. Throughout the year we have worked with 8 area preschools and their representatives to come together in a way that can benefit everyone through sharing ideas, resources and gaining new partnerships while striving for the common goal of success for the preschool children in our area. This was happening in the midst of the funding for tuition scholarships, book bags, and other preschool enhancement progress.

# Adams County Empowerment Area

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## Vision

The vision of the Adams County Empowerment Area (ACEA) is to enhance the quality of life in Adams County by promoting strong, healthy families. Barriers continue to be overcome and programs and services coordinated through community collaboration.

## Overview of Community Plan

Every family faces its own set of challenges. Parents must work to provide for the needs of their children. These needs include guidance and material goods. Time, money and environment all play a role in their ability to address these needs. The demands placed on the family by society may not take into consideration the family's shortfalls in education, socialization, support networks, and income. Service providers, schools, and citizens must and will be challenged to be sensitive to the individual and unique qualities of each family when planning programs with them. Our community plan addresses the wide spectrum of children's first schoolhouse, their home and community, while providing individual and unique supports to families.

## Local Indicators

- Utilization of Parents as Teachers (PAT), the Early Childhood Resource Library (ECRL), or Crisis Child Care
- Family reported change in parenting methods by individuals accessing PAT and ECRL programs
- Children receiving PAT visits and using ECRL programs successfully reaching appropriate milestones as shown by developmental screenings
- # of successful referrals to parent support programs
- # of car seats being used according to restraint "best practice" methods, as identified through the car seat program
- Available child care slots with registered providers
- # of providers participating in professional development programs
- # of children receiving a quality preschool experience

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

**School Ready Programs:** Crisis Child Care, Early Childhood Resource Library, Parents as Teachers, Prescott Preschool Playground Expansion Program, Grace Tabernacle Church Preschool Outreach, Prescott School Summer Literacy Project, MATURA Car Seat Safety Program, \*MATURA preschool scholarship program

\*Program funded at the end of FY 03

**Early Childhood Programs:** Provider Intellectual Development and Health and Safety Workshop

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Crisis Child Care received ACEA support beginning in August 2000. Despite the best efforts of any community, families may find themselves in crisis situations due to stress, health emergencies, employment or family dysfunction, or lack of natural supports. As part of the ACEA efforts, families have the opportunity to resolve crisis and emergencies while their children receive quality care in the home of a registered day care provider. Families utilizing the Crisis Child Care service providers are further encouraged to re-evaluate their support systems and are linked with service providers that can help them successfully plan for future emergency situations.

The Crisis Child Care Program is the result of a concentrated collaboration between the three counties comprising the Decategorization region. Despite the host agency for this program changing in FY03, which produced several administrative challenges, Crisis Child Care remained available to families in the area.

The Early Childhood Resource Library houses materials including developmental toys, books, puzzles, parenting books and videos, and resource manuals. The library boasts that these items are adult/child interactive, "no batteries allowed." The library serves as a "one-stop shop" to connect parents with needed services and agencies. Families or providers may drop in and play, borrow items for extended use, or participate in scheduled community events. Activities that promote children's physical, intellectual, social-emotional, and language skills are available. Focus is on modeling effective caregiver interaction and teaching appropriate developmental levels and expectations.

The library increased outreach efforts to the community during the past year, supplying appropriate games and activities at numerous community events, and providing children with take home activity packs. Also new to the library was a weekly literacy bag program focusing on specific parenting skills via individual development areas. The program contains a community connection component that encourages parents to form relationships with local businesses.

The ECRL served 262 unduplicated households in the past year including parents, grandparents, daycare providers, and professionals working with young children.

Parents as Teachers is housed and operated in conjunction with the Early Childhood Resource Library. Two parent educators have conducted home visits with 53 families in the past year. Each child enrolled in the program receives a developmental screening upon enrollment, at six months of age, and around each birthday. Referrals are made when delays are detected. Another aspect of the program is the referrals families receive when they need "connected" with service providers. By building a large support system for families, these individuals feel more secure in their ability to successfully parent their children. Caregiver/child interaction and attachment is monitored with the use of the HOME observation tool.

Parents as Teachers incorporates a Reading Is Fundamental program into the current program model. The local preschools collaborated to establish lending libraries at each of their sites and participated in book give distributions. Over books were distributed to children for ownership.

A certified car seat safety technician routinely checks the car seats of the families using Parents as Teachers and ECRL services. New seats are available for purchase for a small fee. Seats have been checked in the last year with new seats being distributed.

Early Childhood Intellectual Development Workshop brought registered and unregistered providers to the training table to learn everyday methods to promote children's intellectual skills. Providers practiced these methods, participated in hands-on sensory activities and received health and safety information to ensure safe environments for intellectual growth. The providers received incentives for attendance



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Allamakee, Clayton, Howard, and Winneshiek

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### **Vision and Mission**

Our mission is that all children and families from birth to all ages have their basic needs met, all children know unconditional love, all people have the same opportunities, that diversity is valued, expressed and experienced, and education is offered in diverse ways to all.

By promoting collaboration among our rural small communities, everyone in the HAWC region has access to important information and directs the services needed. Services are community-based, easily accessible, family-centered, promote self-sufficiency, emphasize prevention and intervention, and focus on safety and well-being for all citizens, especially our children. Revised July, 2002

### **Overview of the Community Plan**

The HAWC Empowerment/Decat Area initiative focuses on children, youth and families. The result areas include: Healthy Children and Youth, Safe and Nurturing Families, Children Ready to Succeed in School, Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments, and Safe and Supportive Communities.

### **Local Indicators**

Through HAWC's annual planning session, our local indicators were reviewed. The indicators selected continue to be appropriate for our area.

**Primary Services Provided with Empowerment (E), Decat (D), Juvenile Justice (J), Grant Funding (G), and Past Funding (P)**

Empowerment Programs

HAWC Healthy Families Home Visitors (E)  
FAST: Baby and Pre-School (P)  
Family Circle Communications (E)  
Kindermusik (P)  
Child Care Initiatives (E)  
    Quality Assessments (P)  
    Tier 2 Assistance (P)  
    Revolving Loan Fund  
    Star Providers  
Pre-School Initiatives (E)  
    Grants (P)  
    Head Start Slots (P)  
    Keeland (P)

Decat Programs

Family Circle Communications (D) (J)  
Positive Connect. Intervention Center (JG)  
Girls on the Move (G)

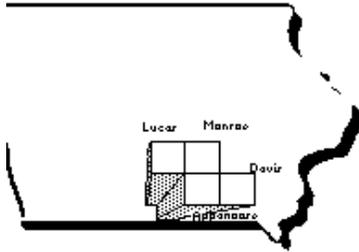
**Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Because of the loss of revenue through State Empowerment for FY 04 and Decat for FY 03 and 04, several collaborative programs have been terminated. Programs included in the termination are: Early Head Start match, Child Care Food Program Tier II, Head Start slots, FAST Preschool, Kindermusik, Child Care Center Grants, Keeland Pre-School, Incentives for Registered Child Care Providers, and Baby HAWC.

A team of providers are searching for funding to continue some of the programs. However, everyone has need of funding and competition is high. Our focus this year will be no or low cost programming that continues to promote cooperation and collaboration. These projects include: Children's Sabbath, Neighborhood Porch Night, and

Through our planning process, it was determined what programs were essential for children and families. The following programs are being maintained: HAWC Healthy Families Home Visitors, Child Care Initiatives, Family Circle Communications, and Positive Connections Intervention Center. Community-Wide Results, and working with local schools on School Improvement Plans.

In addition, HAWC is partnering with Keystone AEA delivering Early Access programming to children and families. The HAWC Home Visitors have been trained and are now working in the field for Early Access.



## A.D.L.M. Empowerment Area

Counties Served: Appanoose County  
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Lucas County  
Monroe County

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### Vision and Mission

All families living within the A.D.L.M. Empowerment Area will have an opportunity to live in a healthy, nurturing, safe environment. This will allow for all individuals to grow to their fullest potential and become productive and contributing members of society. It is the vision of this Empowerment Area that through community partnering unnecessary barriers will be reduced to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health, and human services programs.

By fostering collaboration among agencies and communities within the four county area communications will be improved, unnecessary barriers to community efforts will be reduced, and resources utilized more efficiently and effectively.

### Overview of Community Plan

The School Ready Component of the original community plan was concentrated in implementing the Parents As Teachers program. The original plan was to serve only children from birth to age three. We have recently expanded the services on a limited basis to children ages four and five.

The Early Childhood Component of the community plan strives to improve the availability and quality of childcare and preschool resources in the four county area. We have provided funding assistance to existing providers to update equipment and facilities to improve the quality of childcare and preschool. Funded increased contact hours and availability of preschool. Newly implemented programs involve health consultations and enhanced recruiting and training efforts.

### Local Indicators

Current activities have been implemented to address the following local indicators:

- Percentage of children identified for special education will decline.
- Average skill levels of children entering school in kindergarten or first grade will improve.
- Average skill levels of third grade students will improve.
- Average daily attendance rate of children, grades K-3 will improve.
- Number of student contact hours of low income three and four-year-old children in Head Start will increase.
- Percentage of kindergarten students that attend preschool will improve.
- Number of licensed/registered childcare slots will increase.
- Number of hours of licensed/registered/non-regulated provider participation in training will increase.
- Number of accredited or licensed preschool slots will increase.
- Percentage of registered/licensed childcare providers/childcare slots shall grow relative to the number of unregistered.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- ❖ Parents As Teachers -- Home visitor program designed to empower all parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Provides assistance in designing and implementing programs of developmentally appropriate activities for all children. Also provides a system of network support for participating parents.
- ❖ Health Consultations -- Projects that involve Public Health Nursing in all four counties offering health consultation to existing childcare providers.
- ❖ Childcare Recruitment and Training -- In collaboration with the community action programs in all four counties are providing one child care recruiter and trainer that serves Appanoose and Davis Counties and one child care recruiter and trainer that serves Lucas and Monroe Counties. This also involves collaboration the Child Care Resource and Referral offices in both areas to provide materials and assist with training.
- ❖ Child Care Provider Training -- Several child care provider training opportunities were provided with A.D.L.M. support during this year. It is our goal to continue to provide training especially that designed to provide Child Net Certification to the provider participants and assist child care centers to reach a 6 rating on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS).

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Our Parents As Teachers program has been providing in-home visits since April of 1999. Each county is served by an educator with an average caseload of 30 families. During the last year the program served a total of 302 children in 232 families. 180 of those families had at least one characteristic that identified them as "high need". The 4 educators performed a total of 2,134 home visits. A total of 25 group activities provided the 121 participating families with social interaction with other families, insight on development, creative play with their children and adult support. Each family is afforded the opportunity to have their children participate in developmental screening designed to provide early detection of developmental problems and referral for appropriate services. 179 children were screened with 27 referred for follow-up services. Families are also provided with community resource guides to help them identify and utilize other services provided in their communities that meet their needs. 495 referrals were made to other community resources. Although not a primary part of the program, health awareness has resulted in 82% of the participating 2 year old children being fully immunized.

As part of our overall effort to increase children's readiness to begin school, we have for the past 2 years funded extended hours (increase from 3.5 to 6.25 hours per day) in the Head Start Programs in Appanoose and Davis Counties. These extended hours served 60 children in the 2001-2002 school year and 53 children in the 2002-2003 school year. The two Head Start Programs utilize The Creative Curriculum® which employs The Creative Curriculum® Development Continuum to assess children's growth in four developmental areas: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language --and an overall aggregate. Data from the past 2 years clearly indicates that children's growth during these pre-school years is greatly enhanced by the extended hours in a quality learning environment. In order to evaluate this, comparison data for a similar class without extended hours was provided by Southern Iowa Economic Development Association, the Head Start provider. We have also, as a sidelight, confirmed that consistency is extremely important in these early years. In the 2002-2003 school year, the Davis County Head Start class experienced a 100% turnover in teaching staff. The developmental growth of this class was slowed considerably when compared with Appanoose County and the previous year.

In collaboration with public health services we are continuing to provide programs to make our childcare facilities healthier places. The Public Health Nursing services in each county provide health consultations for childcare providers and also participate in providing health oriented training workshops.

In an effort to increase the availability of childcare we are collaborating with Child Care Resource and Referral and the community action programs serving our area to recruit and train new childcare providers.

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### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to utilize communities, parents, local government, health and human service agencies, child care providers, and schools to better organize existing collaborative efforts, delivering services that promote early childhood education, improve health status and decrease the rate of occurrence of child abuse and neglect, while increasing parental involvement and support.

### **Vision Statement**

All families living within the Partnership 4 Families Empowerment Area will be physically and emotionally healthy, having access to quality child care and intellectual stimulation in their children's early years. These strong families will in turn demonstrate intra-familial interaction and assertive parenting skills, contributing to the success and well being of their communities.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

The Partnerships 4 Families Empowerment Area plan centers on the improvement of quality childcare, improvement of school readiness and the health of all children 0-5. With the fourth year of funding to our area we continued to support our charter programs of HOPES, Early Head Start and the Partnerships 4 Families Child Care Project. Our community plan seeks to expand beyond our charter programs to offer assistance to preschool programs to increase quality of education and slots available to low income families, prenatal families, and other support services for the health and well being of children 0-5.

### **Local Indicators of Partnerships 4 Families**

1. Increase health status of children (emotional, social, physical, and intellectual)
2. Increase parent/care provider involvement with their children to encourage intellectual stimulation of very young children.
3. Create safe and stable families
4. Increase school readiness and success of young children
5. Increase quality, availability and accessibility of childcare

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- ❖ HOPES Home visitation program served 322 children from 224 families in FY03 in the four county area with varying levels of services depending on the needs and risks of the families.
- ❖ Early Head Start served 58 low-income, high-risk children in FY03 with intense weekly visits to the families while offering childcare assistance and medical support to the families.
- ❖ P4F Child Care Project supports the funding of a Home Consultant and a Home Evaluation Specialist. These two persons work closely with all registered childcare

providers in the area offering technical support and evaluation tools to assess the quality of their child care environments.

- ❖ P4F Preschool Tuition and Transportation Program offers tuition assistance to families below 200% poverty to attend the preschool of their choice in the empowerment area. The transportation assistance was offered to any family regardless of income who could not transport their child to preschool.
- ❖ Stork's Nest offers incentives for prenatal and postnatal mothers to practice healthy behaviors for their child.
- ❖ Lead Screening is offered to children at risk of increased lead blood levels. 680 children were screened this year.
- ❖ P4F Literacy Program offered First Books in Iowa with IPTV at 8 sites in our area.
- ❖ Family Financial Education was offered to families who requested the service.
- ❖ Preschool and Day Care Funding was offered to two programs to expand their services.
- ❖ Foster Home Coordinator position increased the availability of foster care slots to young children in our area.
- ❖ Family Support Project offered Parent Time Out and Crisis Care to families and children in need.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts: Results/Accomplishments Successes**

Partnerships 4 Families took a closer look at school readiness skills that children in the four-county area are achieving through established preschool programs. We are fortunate to have 670 preschool slots in our four county area including the following distribution: 140 Head Start slots located at five sites, eight preschools regulated by the Department of Education, and 14 preschool classrooms licensed by the Department of Human Services. The combination of these sites gives us access to adequate slots for approximately 650 four year olds in our area. With the opening of an additional preschool this past year in Greene County, we are able to accommodate most children with in their school district or one in close proximity.

After determining that we had enough slots for all four year olds whose families wanted them to attend preschool, we began to look at barriers families were having in sending their children to the preschool. The two barriers we determined were finances and transportation. A committee was formed to look at ways to remove these barriers for families. The committee developed the Partnerships 4 Families Preschool Tuition and Transportation Program after looking at other programs that were established in the state. In the first year, 12 families were served with tuition assistance and 112 families with transportation assistance. During the year, relationships were developed with preschools and the teachers were informed how the program could help their families. The program increased dramatically during the second year with 67 families requesting tuition assistance and 153 children being transported with in the city limits of six communities. The program was offered to families regardless of income. Families showed their support for the program through positive comments on a year-end survey.

We know that a preschool experience does not guarantee children will be ready to succeed in school, but we do know that children entering kindergarten are influenced by a positive preschool experience. Partnerships 4 Families will continue to encourage and support families in sending their children to preschool for a valuable learning opportunity. We will also take the next step by connecting our preschools and schools that are not currently working together to develop collaboration efforts that will assist in school readiness of the children.



## Benton County Empowerment

### Counties in Area

Benton County

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### Vision and Mission

It is the vision of the Benton County Empowerment Board that families and children living in Benton County will lead happy and productive lives, utilizing services that are available. Benton County citizens will collaborate in planning for services that are needed but are not available in the areas of education, health and human services. All individuals will have the opportunity to develop to their full potential and become successful in school and life.

It is our mission to oversee and coordinate collaborative service for children and families living in or attending school, daycare or preschool services in Benton County. The emphasis is delivering service to children 0-5 years of age. The long-term mission is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services in the areas of education, health and human services for persons of all ages by creating community collaboration and avoiding duplication of services.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Benton County Empowerment Area Community Plan includes four primary goals. The first goal is that all children have access to affordable, quality daycare and preschool programming. The number of slots available has increased with the opening of a new childcare center in Vinton in 2001 as well as new in-home providers starting to offer care. The second goal is to assure that Benton County families will have current, accurate knowledge about the variety of health, education and human service resources available to them. We will continue to decrease duplication of services by agencies providing the service programs. To assure that all parents will have access to the education and training resources necessary to appropriately prepare their children for kindergarten is the third goal. The final goal of our plan is to review programs to ensure 100% participation in evaluation and review of results. We have focused on removing transportation barriers for parents and children 0-5 so they have access to appropriate health, education and human service resources in the past, but that does not seem to be an issue in our county at this time.

### Local Indicators

Number of providers attending provider education classes.

Number of low-income children being served in all centers in Benton County .

Increase in usage of programs funded by Empowerment by a higher percentage of the parents with young children.

100% of all programs funded by Empowerment, both agency and family consumer, will fill out evaluation forms.

Percentage of children entering kindergarten not ready to learn compared to the percentage of students who begin school ready to learn.

Number of confirmed child abuse/neglect cases in the county.

Reading proficiency level of fourth grade students in the county will improve by 2006.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The primary services which were funded with Empowerment dollars in FY '03 included scholarship availability for daycare, preschool, licensed centers for low income families. Nine centers applied for and eight received funding, which assisted in filling otherwise empty slots. We will offer the opportunity for scholarship funds again in the fall. The Child Care Resource Coordinator has been actively meeting with licensed, registered and non-registered providers in the county and has provided resource information to the providers as well as parents and families and continues to work on building a data base of provider and family names. The coordinator also works closely with the Area Education Association and local schools. Empowerment continues its contract with the Young Parents Network who offer the Parents As Teachers home visitation program that continues to expand the number of families it serves. Empowerment has also offered educational opportunities to all providers, preschool and Kindergarten teachers as well as mini- grants for equipment to licensed and registered providers throughout the county .The Benton County Every Child Reads team will provide follow-up visits to centers and homes to continue educating providers on the importance of improving care in Benton County .

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The greatest strides forward this year have been the collaboration efforts of education with the existing community resources and the focus of both groups toward recognizing and meeting the needs of families with children 0-5 year of age.

The Story Sack project, which was unveiled in September, is a new endeavor for Benton County Empowerment. This project involved participation from both childcare providers and families. As part of our continuing effort to promote literacy activities, Empowerment purchased nearly 200 story sacks, which have been distributed to preschools and childcare centers in the county. These story sacks contain a book, a toy, recipes, projects and activities all relating to the theme of the story .This is a lending program in which the tubs are rotated between centers and preschools so that children will have multiple opportunities to check out sacks and a variety of themes throughout the year. Children are encouraged to take them home and share with their families.

The Stork's Nest program is another new project for Benton County Empowerment. The Stork's Nest is a cooperative effort of Benton County Empowerment and Mid-Iowa Community Action's Maternal/Child Health Program. The Stork's Nest is an incentive program that provides the following:

Support and encouragement to increase healthy behaviors in pregnant women

Educational classes related to pregnancy, childbirth, infant care and parenting topics  
Encouragement to receive early and regular prenatal care  
Baby clothing, nursery supplies and equipment

Nationwide, the purpose of the Nest is to reduce the number of low birth weight babies and infant deaths by encouraging mothers to keep their appointments with physicians as well as to educate parents on various topics to promote better living. The local Stork's Nest program will also strive to strengthen families and enhance literacy skills among participants.

Stork's Nest participants gain points for healthy behaviors, such as prenatal appointments, parenting classes or library visits. Each of these activities has a point value. The points are used by participants to purchase baby clothing, nursery supplies and equipment. The Stork's Nest is open to all pregnant women and children up to age two in Benton County. Enrollment and point redemption can be done at WIC clinics in Vinton and Belle Plaine. Participants do not need to be enrolled in WIC to participate in Stork's Nest.

The Child Development Fair held in the Belle Plaine School District, coordinated largely by the Child Care Resource Coordinator recruited service providers throughout the county to staff booths providing information to parents. Individuals from Grant Wood AEA were also available to provide assessments of children who attended the fair that day. There were approximately 30 children screened that day. The event will take place in Vinton next year.



## Cedar Valley's Promise

***“Uniting for the Love of Our Children”***

Mentor Protect Nurture Teach Serve

### Counties in Area

Black Hawk County

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### Vision

Each individual in the Cedar Valley will achieve their maximum potential living in our safe, healthy, supportive, community.

### Mission

“Parents, families, and communities, *united for the love of our children*, will be informed and wholly involved in nurturing our children to ensure access to resources needed for optimal development.”

### Overview of Community Plan

1. Expand Early Head Start Home-based services to an additional 120 families.  
The local Early Head Start program is called Project Hand-in-Hand. It is a family-centered home visitation program. Intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services are provided on a weekly, basis year round, to low-income families with children under age three and to pregnant women. The project links programs for children and parenting support with adult-oriented services such as job training or adult education for parents, and promotes positive outcomes for both children and parents within the context of a family-centered approach to services delivery. Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. oversees this collaborative project. This project is funded by the School Ready Empowerment funding and Early Head Start grant.
2. Improvement and expansion of accessible, high quality child care:  
Through this initiative Cedar Valley's Promise will target the 797 existing child care providers (266 registered and 531 unregistered) and to potential new providers in Black Hawk County. Child Care Resource and Referral of Northeast Iowa (CCR&R) oversees this collaborative project. This project is funded by the Early Childhood Services funding.

## **Local Indicators**

- Raise the basic skill level of our children.
- Improve the health of children in Black Hawk County.
- **Decrease the incidence of child abuse and neglect.**
- Increase parent involvement with their children.
- Increase the early intellectual stimulation of very young children.
- Increase the access of children and families to an adult mentor.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- Every Child Reads Initiative
- Inclusive Child Care Initiative
- Healthy Child Care Iowa
- ChildNet
- Hand-in-Hand Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- ITERS/ECERS/FDCRS training
- National Smart Start conference
- Playground Safety Research Project
- Apprenticeship/Degree Program Coordination
- Excellence in Early Education Awards

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

A legislative forum and tour of childcare centers was completed on January 7, 2003. The CVP task team emphasized with legislators the federal priority of reauthorization of the Federal Child Care Development Fund, which is critically important to Iowa's children and families.

Cedar Valley's Promise area is working together to implement the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) system, a tool used to focus on three protective factors—attachments, self-control, and initiative—which are closely related to social and emotional development. The DECA also looks at the child's use of specific challenging behaviors. A core committee was created and represented by AEA 267, CCR&R, Head Start, Cedar Valley's Promise Empowerment, and DECA Local Program Mentors. This committee provided the necessary guidance for decision-making and support of all that participated in this project. Tri-County Child and Family Development (Head Start) began implementation of the DECA program in collaboration with the Success4 grant participants. As an end result of the training in observation, interpretation of the DECA assessment and the use of the DECA program strategy guide, the teachers were able to document improvement in the resiliency protective factors. Also the teacher's perceptions about behavior concerns shifted as they observed how changing areas of the total classroom environment helped children perform in their classroom.

On April 8, 2003 an Early Education Excellence Award Ceremony was held and five awards were made to deserving recipients for their work in early childhood education. In addition, 52 certificates of Recognition were presented to those nominated.

## Boone County Empowerment Area

**Counties in Area:** Boone County

**Contact for Area:** Sara Behn, Coordinator

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### Vision, Mission, and Community Plan

Through the creation of the Boone County Empowerment Board, we are better able to enhance our county's ability to develop and sustain a nurturing and supportive community culture that is committed to all citizens, especially our children. Our mission is to provide outreach to all families in the Boone County Empowerment Area in order to improve their access to opportunities, resources, and supports needed to build strong and healthy families. We strive to create and sustain a unified system of education, health, and social services. Our long range goal is to support all families in meeting their children's emotional, physical, and social needs which are essential stepping stones to maximizing each child's learning potential.

The program initiatives are designed to maximize and build on the resources already present in the county. This will ensure a collaborative and efficient service system to avoid duplication. A full service community Family Resource Center is being developed for grand opening in summer, 2004. The Center responds to the immediate needs of the community including: **Head Start**, expanding the program from two half-day programs, to two full time classrooms; an **accredited infant and child care center**, with additional preschool services and will likely operate non-traditional hours; and **Adult Day Services**, a program to be operated by the Boone County Hospital to provide respite care for caregivers and their loved ones. These programs will be accessible by any family in Boone County. Currently, the vision is close to becoming a reality. Three years ago, a professional consultant assessed the community's support and the response was positive. Since then, the project has been awarded a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant through the Iowa Department of Economic Development, and Boone County Empowerment has obtained 501(c)(3) legal non-profit status. The City of Boone will take ownership of the Center, and has committed \$500,000 from a private trust that was intended for the construction of a human services facility in Boone County. The City has also made available \$400,000 as a challenge grant for raising private funds. That challenge has been met. The center's future home is located south of DMACC in Boone on 4.9 acres of land that was gifted to the project. Over the past fiscal year, the fundraising campaign has organized and completed its one year commitment of raising funds. We currently have funds totaling \$2,447,032 toward the \$2.5 million dollar goal. Groundbreaking took place in August, 2003 with a finish date expected in May, 2004.

The Empowerment Board continues its work with University of Iowa, School of Social Work to provide outcome measurement of our programs. This service is a continuation of the Technical Assistance funds in FY 02.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding and Local Indicators:

#### **Lack of outreach and screening for pregnant and post-partum women and their families**

**A high teen birth rate** - In 1995, the teen birth rate was higher than the state average of 10.9%. In 2001, Boone County is closing the gap of teen births with 4% of live births to moms under the age of 18, making this only 1% higher than the State average.

**Child abuse rates** - In 1994, there were 64 documented, founded cases of child abuse, resulting in a rate higher than the state average. In 1995, there were 65 founded cases. In 1999, there were 53 founded cases, and then an increase in 2002 to 68 cases.

**Percentage of low birth weight infants** - The percentage of infants who are born at a low birth weight has increased steadily from 4.2% in 1994, to 5.2% in 1995, and 9.7% in 1996. Recent data shows in 2000 a decrease to 4.4%. Then 2001, an increase to 8.2%.

**Immunization rates at age 2** - The percentage of fully immunized two-year-olds has increased steadily during the 1900's, to a reported coverage of 98% for 1996. In 1999, the percentage fell slightly to 96.5%.

**Incidence of infants born affected by drugs, alcohol and tobacco** - Close to 17% of all infants born in Boone County in 1996 were exposed pre-natally to maternal smoking. In the nine months (9/97-6/98) that the Healthy Futures Program (HF) was screening pregnant women, 26% reported having used drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes in the past month. In 2002, of the 169 women screened, 30% reported having used ATOD.

**Percentage of mothers not receiving prenatal care in the first trimester** - In Boone County, there are approximately 35-40 infants born each year without the benefit of the early screening. By 2001, only 21 (13%) did not receive the benefit of an early screen.

#### **Need for programs and day care options that provide safe environments and quality learning/ development**

**On-going waiting list for entrance into Head Start and other preschool programs are full**

**Percentage of kindergarten students identified as not "school-ready" on social, cognitive, and emotional development assessments** - In 1999, the percentage was greater than 25%, meaning more than one quarter of kindergartners were not "school ready". The trend continues into the 2002 and 2003 surveys.

**A general shortage of available/affordable day care options, especially for children ages 0-2 from working families:** In 2003, there were 11 Infant Network Providers which allows for 19 infant (age 0-2) spaces in home child care settings. A total of 78 infant spaces have been identified in the County. The Family Resource Center will add another 16 spaces in 2004.

**Children ages 0-5 with both parents in the labor force** – For 70% of preschool children who live with both parents, both parents are in the labor force; for 67% of preschool children living in single parent families, their single parent is in the labor force.

**Support needed for Infant Care Providers and a need for professionalization/increase in status of child care workers** – A provider survey reported a need for more training about infants and specialized care and assistance with acquiring needed equipment. Technical assistance in financial management and problem solving as well as better pay were also recommended.

### **Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

**Center for Child Care Resources** – The Provider Services/Infant Care Coordinator provides professional support to in-home child care providers and recruits new persons willing to provide in-home infant and toddler care. The Coordinator assists the providers to better the quality of their business through professional development classes and conferences. The Infant Network was established as a method of motivating in-home providers to become registered with the State of Iowa and open more infant slots in the Boone County Empowerment Area.

**Healthy Futures** – Every pregnant woman in Boone County is eligible to participate in by responding to a questionnaire at her doctor's prenatal appointment. The mothers have the opportunity to receive home visits from a nurse who is able to address the new mother's concerns regarding the baby's development and nutrition. The Family Development Specialist provides additional support to the family to provide on-going home visitation, goal-setting assistance, parent education, and connecting them with existing resources in the community.

**Building Blocks Preschool** – "Building a firm foundation for future success" is the motto of the Building Blocks Preschool. The Teacher and the Teacher Associate address important areas such as social skills, academics, nutrition, dental health, family and arts. Due to decreased funding, the Board had to eliminate the Family Advocate position who provided support through home visits twenty-nine (29) hours per week. A family would qualify if their income falls at or below 185% of the poverty level.

**"Wrap-around" Child Care Services** – The Building Blocks Preschool works closely with New Horizons Child Care Center in order to accommodate parents who work full time. The parents are able to drop off their children at the child care center as early as 6 A.M. The children are then transported to preschool from 8:15 A.M. to 2:15 P.M. The children are transported back to the child care center where they can stay until 6 P.M.

**Planning Services** – The Board has contracted with Hartsook and Associates to provide planning and fundraising strategy services for the Family Resource Center. The consultant completed a feasibility study and assisted the coordinator with developing the \$1 million fundraising campaign.

**\*Grand Community School District in Boxholm** – The Empowerment Board awarded the Grand Beginnings Preschool in Boxholm a mini-grant of \$5,000 for transportation costs. Boxholm is located in the far Northwest corner of the county making it a very rural area. Children are bussed in from miles away, and even another county, making transportation an enormous expense. They participated in the Al's Pals violence prevention training with Empowerment funds.

**\*Ogden Early Learning Program** – There was an identified need in Ogden to provide a preschool opportunity to low income families. Drake Head Start funds a portion of the program, however, the school district is expected to implement the remainder. The Empowerment Board felt it was necessary to assist this program in keeping with the mission of providing services to all families in Boone County, particularly the more rural areas.

***\*received one-time grant in past years, unable to fund in FY 03 due to budget cuts.***

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

**Center for Child Care Resources:** Since the program began in 1999, the number of identified child care slots in Boone County has increased by **120** slots, with **19** additional infant slots in 2003. The number of group training sessions offered in Boone County to providers increased from **4 to 45**. The increased number of group training options reflects coordination of the ChildNet training series and continuing collaborative training efforts between ISU Extension and Heartland AEA.

**Healthy Futures:** In FY 03, 136 screens of pregnant women in Boone County were assessed a risk. Only 15% were assessed "no risk", 68% were assessed as "low risk" and the remaining 17% were considered "moderate to high risk". The year-to-date total staff contacts from Healthy Futures, Home Health Care of Boone County Hospital, and HOMEWARD Nursing Service have made **358** home visits, completed **367.75** hours of direct contact, **140.5** hours on the phone with participants, another **62.25** hours in attempting calls, and **107** hours of transportation.

**Building Blocks:** During the school year 2002-2003, there were 18 children enrolled in Building Blocks Pre-school. This number remained constant as no children moved or dropped out from the program. All of the children were four years of age as of September 15, 2002 and live in the Boone School District. Nine of the children live in single-parent homes and nine live in two-parent homes. Nine of the children participated in the "wrap-around" care provided by Empowerment and **New Horizons Child Care Center**.

**Family Resource Center Planning Services:** The FRC will house an accredited infant and child care center with additional preschool services, Head Start classrooms, and Adult Day Services. The City of Boone will take ownership of the facility once it is built. With the Federal CDBG grant and many other generous contributions from grants, foundations and private donations, the project broke ground in August, 2003 and is scheduled for completion in May, 2004.

**\*Ogden Early Learning Program:** Offers preschool services to 16 children, 8 of which are under 100% of poverty.

**\*Boxholm Grand Beginnings:** During school year 02-03, there were 21 participants in the Shared Visions program with 14 of those children from Boone County. The accredited program also participated in the Al's Pals Violence Prevention training offered by Empowerment.

***\*received one-time grant in past years, unable to fund in FY 03 due to budget cuts.***

## Together 4 Families

### Counties in Area

Bremer, Butler, Franklin, and Grundy Counties

### Contact Person for the Area

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### Vision and Mission

The vision of the Bremer, Butler, Franklin and Grundy County Empowerment Area is to create communities that recognize the value of collaboration in regard to providing an environment for children that is safe, healthy, nurturing and intellectually stimulating. The vision is based on the beliefs that each child has a right to be safe, healthy, nurtured and educated; families/parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children's needs are met and rights fulfilled; all members of the community can and should play a role in promoting the overall well-being of families and children by being inclusive and providing opportunities for families to meet their basic needs; and each family and community in the area has strengths that can be built upon.

### Overview of Community Plan

Together 4 Families hosted monthly planning meetings to identify priority issues for families with children and services that were likely to result in positive outcomes for those families. The planning committee identified child care, coordination, early intervention, parent education, reunification, mentoring, child abuse prevention, and substance abuse, which included underage drinking as priority needs in the four county area. The collaborative utilized funding from a variety of sources, which included Empowerment, Juvenile Justice, and Promoting Safe & Stable Families dollars, to implement the needed services. Together 4 Families matched the services that were identified as priorities with the most appropriate funding source.

### Local Indicators

- Low birth rate
- Rate of immunization by age 2
- # of children receiving preschool scholarships
- Children entering kindergarten are ready for school
- Parent knowledge on infant/child development
- Incidence of child abuse
- # of preschool scholarships
- Parent knowledge of infant/child development
- Healthy parenting skills
- Positive parent-child interactions
- # of registered/licensed child care providers
- # of unregistered, referable child care providers listed with Child Care Resource and Referral
- # of licensed, registered, and non-regulated providers participating in training
- # of parents utilizing Child Care Resource and Referral consultation service when selecting child care
- Child abuse in child care setting

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

Resource Development Coordinator & Mini Grants: The full-time Resource Development Coordinator's role is to provide outreach and support to childcare providers. The mini-grant program that the coordinator administers is intended to serve as an incentive for child care providers to become registered, while promoting infant care and age appropriate brain stimulation.

Parenting Newsletters: Parenting newsletters will be distributed to all parents of children ages 0-5. Parenting newsletters are a proven way to improve parenting skills, reduce child abuse, and strengthen early childhood development.

HOPES: HOPES is a home visitor program for the parents of newborns that promotes healthy child development and parental nurturing skills.

PAT: Parents As Teachers is a home visitor program that enhances children's language, intellectual, social, and motor skills.

Preschool Scholarships: Children not eligible for Head Start and unable to pay for other preschool fees would be eligible for tuition scholarships.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

Together 4 Families serves the entire four-county area. However, each county and some of the communities also have their own "grass roots" level collaboratives. All of the collaboratives have broad-based community representation and are focused on meeting the needs of families with children. Open communication exists among all of the collaborative groups, which has made it possible to maximize the resources for families with children that are currently available in the area. The project coordinator attends local community meetings and makes a report to the Together 4 Families planning committee on meeting discussions.

As a result of the collaborative efforts, duplication of services is eliminated. It is also a great way for each county to identify needs and eliminate different groups working separately to reach a similar goal.

The HOPES and PAT collaborate very well with one another in order to avoid duplication. Communication is a key when deciding which program will best serve the family.

Also, the providers, who receive empowerment dollars, work very well together. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis to share information for the betterment of their programs and receive support and suggestions for challenges.



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**Name of Community Empowerment Area**

Buchanan, Delaware and Fayette Decat/Community Empowerment Area

**Counties in the Area**

Buchanan, Delaware and Fayette Counties

**Contact for the Area**

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**Vision/Mission**

Families are at the heart of our communities. We envision families growing and prospering in communities that promote family self-esteem, self-sufficiency and self-determination.

**Overview of Community Plan**

Area agencies, public health, schools and citizens continue to work together to develop creative and innovative services for children and families. The BDF Board, its councils and work groups structure continue to look at available services, examine gaps and build upon those areas that have demonstrated need.

The BDF Board continued to focus on:

Examining its role and that of advisory councils to determine how to better communicate and collaborate to best serve the BDF area. Work groups meet monthly to develop and discuss direct support for providers working with Child Care, School Ready, Health and Parent Education programs. The network of those benefiting from programs supported by Empowerment continues to grow.

The work groups have a bird's eye view of programs that work and greatly influence recommendations for change. The FY03 Community Empowerment plan reflected these recommendations; successful programs were fine-tuned and continued. The combined Decategorization, though limited in funding, and Empowerment process continues to look at the big picture of available services and gaps.

The primary goal continues to be to establish a service system that incorporates the strengths of each community to better serve the families and children in the BDF area.

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Targeted Results</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Results</b>
CCR&R (Child Care Resource & Referral)	Children Ready to Succeed in School	Increased number of children attending preschool  Availability of Quality preschools	Preschool Scholarships  Trning grants Science, Music Literacy, Diversity  Eval./follow-ups- ECERS  Mini-grants for Evaluated programs  Kindegarten assessments	ISU/Extension AEA/Freeburg Center  ISU/Extension  ACCESS AEA/Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>69 appved in 17 preschools</li> <li>Increase in #'s staff training</li> <li>Completed 6 centers eval.</li> <li>6 centers receive mini-grants</li> <li>Scholarship students 92% had 7 or more skills out of 10 compared to 81% w/no preschool</li> </ul>
Volunteer Coop In., Parent Share & Support, Reg. Med. Ctr., Kindermusik  Vol. Coop PS&S Operation: New View CA	Secure & Nurturing Families	Parents assessing parent education  Teen Birth Rates  Child abuse rates  Educated Commnity/Parents	HOPES Parents as Teachers Kindermusik  Crisis Child Care Maximum 72 hour emergency care in licensed/registere d care/other referrals as needed  Parent Education Work Group- Early Childhood Fairs	Referrals: Public Health, Courts, DHS, self, client, realtors; dept. of Corrections; other agencies; faith groups  See above  Collaboration 2/all agencies, providers, communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in children and parents served; referrals for services; demand for parent support services.</li> <li>88 families inc. 174 children have received Emergency services</li> <li>Over 1,000 in total attendance</li> </ul>
CCR&R  CCR&R Child Care Work Group  Operation: New View CA Kidsville NEICA	Secure & Nurturing Child Care Environments	TA Support for and Increase in registered/licensed providers  Recognition of Providers/staff  Access to child care	Empowerment funded Coordinator/ Recruiter  Provider Minigrants Staff Training  Appreciation Celebration  Child Care Scholarships	Agency Referrals  CCR&R Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>715 TA contacts</li> <li>Increase of 13 providers</li> <li>20 applicants serving 438 families and 544 children completed training</li> <li>150 providers staff recognized</li> <li>35 families utilized scholarships</li> </ul>

# BUENA VISTA, CRAWFORD & SAC COUNTIES COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AREA BUILDING VISIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUCCESS

## Contact

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## Geographic Area Served

Counties	Buena Vista County	Crawford County	Sac County
School Districts	Storm Lake/St. Mary's	Denison	Sac City
	Alta	Schleswig	Wall Lake View Auburn
	Sioux Central	ArWeVa	Odebolt-Arthur
	Newell-Fonda/Fonda OLGC	Charter Oak-Ute	Schaller-Crestland
	Albert City-Truesdale	Irwin-Kirkman-Manilla	

## Vision

It is the vision of the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area that all children are able to live in safe and nurturing families, in supportive communities, and able to succeed in school, preparing them to be responsible adults, parents, and citizens.

## Mission

The mission of BVCS is to improve the quality of life for children and families in Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties through advocating for and supporting quality, life-long education and facilitating a coordinated system of community services.

Collaborative guidance for our Community Empowerment Area is provided by four boards comprised of a wide variety of citizens, public and private school administrators and personnel, Area Education Agencies, Community Action Agencies and Head Start Programs, child care center staff, Departments of Public Health, law enforcement, mental health providers, substance abuse treatment providers, Child Care Resource & Referral, Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services, and other local providers of services to the families and children of our area. With a structure comprised of action teams in our local communities and three individual county Advisory Boards, all overseen by a three-county Community Empowerment Board, the unique needs of our entire area are addressed both individually and collectively. This structure has provided increased communication and cooperation not only for our direct Empowerment activities, but for additional collaborations between participating community partners.

## Local Indicators

Linking Local Activities to State Indicators			
State Desired Results	Local Program	Local Desired Results	Local Indicators
<b>Healthy Children</b>	Family STEPS	The health, safety, and development of children will improve with access to pre-natal services that are available to all families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of babies born who weigh under 5 lbs 5 oz</li> <li>▪ Rate of children immunized at a public clinic by age 2</li> </ul>
<b>Safe and Nurturing Families</b>	Early Childhood Mini-Grants	Children will live in families that are safe, secure and nurturing, with families having access to parent education and support programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children ages 0-18 whose abuse has been founded by DHS</li> <li>▪ Birth rate for females aged 17 and younger</li> </ul>
<b>Safe and Supportive Communities</b>	Preschool Enrichment Grants	Families will live in communities that are safe and supportive of children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total arrests of children 18 years and under for any offense</li> <li>▪ % of lowans age 18 and under whose income is at or below the federal poverty level</li> </ul>
<b>Children Ready To Succeed In School</b>	Baby Boutique	Children will enter school ready to learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ %Preschools receiving mini-grants that are accredited or working towards accreditation</li> </ul>
<b>Secure and Nurturing Childcare Environments</b>		Children will have access to safe and nurturing child care environments within the communities of their choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # "slots" or "spaces" potentially available for a child in a registered setting</li> <li>▪ % child care settings receiving mini-grants that have expanded capacity with mini-grants</li> <li>▪ % child care settings receiving mini-grants that have or receive training in Early Brain research strategies</li> </ul>

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes

### Family STEPS: Support To Experience Parenting Success



Family STEPS is our in-home visitation and family support program. Following family-centered practices and principles, Family STEPS offers home visits, support and education for all families expecting a child or with a child ages 0-5 to help provide a healthy start in life. Family STEPS assists families through prenatal support, quality child care, parenting skills and confidence-building, linkage to a medical home, and referrals to community resources. Family STEPS uses nationally known research-based curriculums to share appropriate information with families. Two years ago, Family STEPS added teen moms support groups in an effort to better reach the teens in our communities. This has been very successful in making participation in Family STEPS more approachable for these young parents. Family STEPS is a collaborative effort of Buena Vista County Public Health, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, Crawford County Home Health/Hospice/Public Health, Lutheran Services in Iowa, and Sac County Health Services. Family STEPS is supported by the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area School Ready Funds. In FY 03, Family STEPS served 351 families, an increase of 34% from FY 02 and exceeding our initially identified goal of 240 families per year by FY 2003.

### Early Childhood (TANF) Mini-Grants

24 Early Childhood Mini-grants provided local communities with financial assistance to address the unique needs of the early childhood environments within their communities. Early Childhood Mini-grants have addressed health and safety needs, preschool scholarships, expansion of capacity of child care, increased preschool slots, and transportation assistance. Mini-grants are supported by the Buena Vista, Crawford, and Sac Counties Community Empowerment Area Early Childhood Funds.

### Preschool Enrichment Grants

26 projects received assistance through a one-time enrichment grant project. Many unique projects were assisted: Additional instruction assistants were added several classrooms to increase the number of classes per week, increase the number of children served, and enhance the preschool experience, one project partnered their funds with a school to provide school bus retrofitting in order to continue providing preschool transportation, and an in-home school preparation service was provided in a small community which had experienced an influx of non-English speaking families. Nationally recognized curriculums with valid assessment tools were provided to 24 preschool classrooms. Preschool Enrichment projects were funded with School Ready Funds.

### Baby Boutique

Two Baby Boutique projects have been initiated in our area. The Boutiques are immensely popular, with both exceeding 100 families participating this year. Modeled after the March of Dimes Stork's Nest, the Baby Boutiques offer participants expecting a baby or with a child up to age two an opportunity to earn points through activities such as appropriate medical care, Family STEPS visits, attending education classes, and keeping their child's immunizations up to date. Earned points can be redeemed for baby/child necessities such as diapers, car seats, developmental toys, etc. Baby Boutiques all offer monthly classes on breastfeeding support and a monthly class on topic of interest such as discipline. Multiple community partners assist in providing the planning, staffing, child care, and guest speaking roles. Community support through donation of items as well as some cash funds has been very gracious. Start-up funding was provided through School Ready funds; the Baby Boutiques have now partnered with the March of Dimes Stork's Nest in order to increase funding potential and receive technical assistance.



# Linking Families and Communities

(Calhoun, Pocahontas and Webster County Empowerment)

## Contact for Area

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## Vision

“Happy, Healthy Children”

## Mission:

Our mission is to empower parents in raising happy, healthy children by providing families with educational, economic and health support by coordinating services with community resources.

## Overview of Community Plan

Linking Families and Communities is located in the Northwest region of the state and is comprised of Calhoun, Pocahontas and Webster counties. Through Empowerment, agencies collaborate to maximize resources and programs to better serve children and families age 0-5.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding and Indicators

### Child Care Consultants

The Child Care Consultants work with childcare home providers and centers to improve the quality of care, ensure compliance, promote and recruit licensed childcare providers. Childcare providers receive incentives, training and support from the Child Care Consultants.

- Number of registered/licensed childcare that provide non-traditional hour childcare.
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed childcare that provide non-traditional hour childcare.
- Number of register/licensed child care providers.
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed providers.
- Number of registered/licensed childcare providers that provide at least two of the following: nontraditional childcare, sick childcare, infant care, and special needs childcare.
- Turnover rate of registered/licensed providers that provide at least two of the following: nontraditional childcare, sick childcare, infant care, and special needs childcare.

### Child Care Health Consultants

The Child Care Health Consultants work with childcare providers and centers to improve health and safety concerns and encourage registration among non-registered providers. Childcare providers receive health and safety training from the Child Care Health Consultants.

- Number of registered child care providers in compliance with the “Checklist for Day Care Home Registration”.
- Number of non-registered child care providers in compliance with the “Checklist for Day Care Home Registration”.

### **Preschool Opportunities Expansion Program**

Tuition scholarships and transportation reimbursement is available to families with a 3 – 5 year old in each of the counties. The parents can apply for these programs at the preschool of their choice and may qualify for a \$50 scholarship (most scholarships are \$20 -\$30) and transportation reimbursement. This program enables families to give their children a preschool experience and ensure that they are school ready. Preschools can apply for a \$1,500 mini-grant to improve the quality of their preschool through projects that develop or improve opportunities for school readiness.

- Preschools must complete an application and submit a project proposal.
- Percentage of capacity used in Head Start classrooms.
- Percentage/Number enrolled in Private Preschools.
- Percentage of the transportation and tuition scholarships utilized for children to attend preschool.
- Number of preschools that submit an application to develop or improve opportunities for school readiness.

### **Family Foundations**

Family Foundations offers pregnant women and all new parents appropriate supportive services and offers those at risk families an intensive home visitation service. The level of appropriate supportive services is identified from a universal risk screening of all families with newborns and/or prenatal women. The program then assists families in designing an Individual Family Support Plan based on strengths and goals and works with families over an extended period to achieve these goals.

- Percentage of children in Family Foundations showing delayed physical development will be linked and access community resources.
- Percentage of children in Family Foundations (FF) showing delayed cognitive development will be linked and access community resources.
- Percentage of children in Family Foundations will be fully immunized by age two.
- Percentage of families in FF will access a medical home.
- Rate per 1,000 for children ages 0-17 of confirmed child abuse/neglect reports.
- Percentage of families in FF will participate in an age and developmentally appropriate curriculum for children.
- Percentage of families in FF will improve home safety.
- Percentage of families in FF will receive information on family planning.
- Percentage of families in FF will verbalize increased information on choosing childcare.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

- The Preschool Program provided scholarships for 124 children in Calhoun, Pocahontas and Webster County to attend preschool. Through the cooperation of teachers and preschool directors/principals/superintendents this program has grown rapidly. The Preschool Program also granted \$1,500 grants to 21 preschools for school readiness activities and materials.
- Child Care Consultants and Health Consultants continue to work together to provide information and support to childcare providers and work to improve their environments. The Consultants also work closely with DHS to ensure that childcare is safe. Having both the Child Care Consultant and the Health Consultant available has enabled parents and child care providers, both non-registered and registered, to have access to a greater number of resources and information. The Consultants have been able to provide a great deal of training to child care providers and helped families gain access to existing community programs i.e. Family Foundations, HAWK-I and etc.
- Family Foundations continues to work with the AEA, Early ACCESS and medical home projects to ensure that children are getting their immunizations, being evaluated thoroughly when there are delays and getting appropriate services. Family Foundations worked with 127 families with 240 children this year, providing information, support and assistance to parents in raising happy, healthy children.



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### **Vision**

The vision of Cass/Mills/Montgomery Boost4Families is to support quality services that are integrated, comprehensive, and family centered, resulting in nurtured, resilient, healthy, and responsible individuals.

### **Motto**

**Strong Families**  **Iowa's Future**

### **Overview of Community Plan**

Cass, Mills, and Montgomery counties were designated an Empowerment Area in January 1999. The three counties include a population of approximately 41,002, with 2,413 children ages 0-5. Prior to January 1999, the three counties worked together as a child welfare Decategorized area, and as an Innovation Zone. Decat and Empowerment are completely integrated in this area, sharing governance structures, personnel, and other resources. In May 1999, the area was designated by the National Partnership for Re-Inventing Government as a "Boost4Kids" site, further strengthening the focus on achieving positive results for children. The Annie E. Casey Foundation established Cass, Mills, and Montgomery counties as part of their rural *Making Connections* project, to provide financial education opportunities to families in southwest Iowa in December 2002.

Boost4Families has reduced the number of programs funded for FY04, due to the implementation of the funding formula. The focus of future Empowerment activities will be on sustaining the excellent programs we have established over the last four years.

### **EMPOWERMENT GOALS**

The following are Boost4Families Empowerment goals:

- Ensure access to preschool services for at-risk children ages 3-5;
- Ensure a comprehensive program for child development education for parents of children ages 0-5; and
- Increase the availability and quality of child care.

### **Local Indicators**

The following indicators will measure the success of Empowerment activities achieving Boost4Families' goals:

1. Measurement of skill level/readiness of children entering kindergarten
2. Percentage of kindergarten students who have attended preschool
3. Number of available preschool spaces
4. Teen birth rate and percentage of births to mothers age 20 or older
5. Low birth weight rate
6. Immunization rate at age 2
7. Child abuse rate
8. Percentage of parents accessing parenting/community resources before leaving the hospital after the birth of a child
9. Number of licensed/registered child care slots
10. Number of center-based infant care, sick child care, and night care slots

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Parent Education Programs: During FY03, three Parents As Teachers programs (one in each county) served 594 children, 432 families and made 4,252 home visits. Building Families in Cass County met with 74 families during the year, with 93 children served during the fourth quarter. I Care About Kids, Inc offered parenting classes in three counties during FY03, with 77 participants completing the course. The Mills County Nest

program served 76 parents. Parents in this program earn points by participating in parenting activities. These points can be spent in the Mills County Nest store on items for the infant.

Emergency Child Care: In FY03, I Care About Kids, Inc. provided Crisis Child Care to Mills and Montgomery counties. During that year, Mills County had **44 days** of service with **317 hours** of child care. Montgomery County had **318 days** of service with **3,764 hours** of child care. Family Crisis Support Network operates the Crisis Nursery in Cass County, which is not funded by Boost4Families.

Newborn Visitation: The New Parent visitation program in Cass, Mills, and Montgomery counties provided **107 new parent home visits** for the year.

Lead Screening: Lead screening began in Mills County on January 2002. To date, over **160 children** have been tested for lead poisoning. This program was partially funded through Boost4Families during FY03.

Families Growing & Knowing: Results from the distribution of the Families Growing and Knowing Bags have been compiled. In FY03, **1,419 bags** were distributed in the three counties.

Child Care Development Specialist: A Child Care Development Specialist provided **302 on-site visits** to child care providers both in homes and centers in an effort to promote quality child care. The specialist also performs ITERS/ECERS quality child care measurements in provider homes in the three counties. The specialist has **evaluated 28 homes and centers** in the three counties.

Extended Day And Weekend Care Grant: To increase the availability of evening and weekend child care, **10 providers** accessed a grant providing an increase in the hourly wage for home/center providers who care for children ages 0-5 after 6 p.m. during the week or anytime on the weekend.

Infant Equipment Grant: Grants are available to assist licensed/registered child care providers and centers in the expansion of child care services for infants (birth-2) offered in the three counties. Grants allow for the purchase of infant furniture and toys. In FY03, **14 infant equipment grants** were approved. An enhancement of this grant started in January 2001 includes children ages 3-5 and includes consumables such as art/craft supplies. In FY03, **38 enhancement grants** were approved. Both grants allow up to \$500 for home providers and \$2,000 for centers.

Preschool Tuition Grants: The 10 school districts in Cass, Mills and Montgomery counties have approved 144 Tuition Grants for preschool children the 2002-03 school year. Tuition grants of up to \$50 per month were available to parents.

Transportation Of Preschool Children: Boost4Families has contracted with a local taxi-cab and community trolley companies, and is working with preschools as well as school districts to provide transportation for students to and from preschool. During the 2002-03 school year, **32 children** were served.

Preschool Staff Development Grants: Cass/Mills/Montgomery Boost4Families offers a \$500 staff development grant to area preschool staff to support continuing education. Applications are accepted three times per year.

Preschools: Glenwood and Nishna Valley Schools each opened at-risk preschool classrooms in the fall of 1999 with Empowerment funding. For the 2002-03 school year, Nishna Valley **served 20** preschool students, while Glenwood **served 16** using preschool services. Also in FY03, Boost4Families assisted in funding the Fremont - Mills Preschool and the Red Oak Right Start Shared Visions Preschool.

Selection Of Kindergarten Readiness Measurement Tool: The **10 school districts** continue to use a common tool to measure the "school readiness" of each year's entering kindergarten class. The 1999 tool provided the baseline. Each fall, kindergarten teachers evaluate the readiness of each student, with measurable results shown in many areas.



**CEDAR COUNTY EMPOWERMENT  
P.O. BOX 23, TIPTON, IA 52772**

**Counties in Area**

Cedar

**Contact for Area:**

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& Wendy Daedlow (secretary)  
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(please communicate with both via the web)

**Vision**

The Vision of the Cedar County Empowerment Working Committee is to:

Preserve the family as the central system of support for all children.

Empower families to protect and support all children, while maintaining their rights, safety, and dignity.

Improve cooperation among the public, private, and consumer entities within the community to enhance collaboration among the health, education, and family welfare systems.

Our vision is based on the principles of:

The community represents all individuals working or living within Cedar County.

The family is the basic unit of support for children, therefore, the basic unit of the community.

Parents are primarily responsible for meeting the needs of their children. The community supports the parent's efforts to meet these needs.

- To the extent that it is possible, services should be accessible to the family within the community.
- The community can best meet the needs of families and children when health, education, and welfare services collaborate.
- The families and children who receive community services should be given greater opportunities to become participants in community planning.
- The health, education, and welfare systems can best meet needs when they have the flexibility and autonomy to respond to the unique characteristics of the community

## **Overview of Community Plan**

### **Mission Statement**

Cedar County Empowerment Area Board will provide leadership and support needed to implement a comprehensive effort to assess, plan, and deliver services to improve the lives of young children. The board will work with existing and new community resources to serve young children and their families. Our goal will be to improve the child's physical and mental health, to provide a better environment for learning and growth, and to increase/improve parenting skills.

The foremost goal of our empowerment area will be to increase the physical and mental health of our children 0 to 5, by aiding in development of services for the child, the parents and the caregivers. Our focus will be to support and fund programs that will meet the needs we have prioritized; but to also be open to new and innovative projects.

### **Local Indicators**

The core indicators used to gauge the success of activities outlined were selected through a consensus of the Cedar County Empowerment Area Working Committee. The Working Committee has agreed that increased services could be by either expansion through current providers or new provider services or a combination of both.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

## CERRO GORDO, HANCOCK AND WORTH COUNTIES EMPOWERMENT AREA

### Contact

Becky Bernemann, Empowerment Service  
Coordinator  
Cerro Gordo County Department of Public  
Health  
22 N. Georgia Avenue, Suite 300  
Mason City, IA 50401

(641) 421-9329 Fax: (641) 421-9350  
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Some information available at [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com)

### Mission

Building strategies to improve the lives of children and their families through collaboration, coordination, and planning in Cerro Gordo, Hancock, and Worth Counties.

*(Revised on February 18, 2003 during the board retreat.)*

### Overview of Community Plan

- ★ Empower new and expectant parents through a parent support/education/home visitation program.
- ★ Improve accessible and quality child care and preschool for all families with young children.
- ★ Enrich the network of community health services to guarantee children a healthy start.

### Local Indicators

The following are the top priority indicators for FY 02-03 (in random order):

- Children enrolled in preschool
- Number of families participating in home visitation programs
- Infants born with low birth weight
- Children immunized by age 2 and school entry
- Number of mothers receiving prenatal care
- Number of children tested for blood lead levels
- Number of founded child abuse cases
- Infants born affected by drugs
- Number of founded family/domestic violence cases
- Kindergarten readiness
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level
- Training opportunities for childcare providers (number of providers trained, number of registered/licensed providers)

(The top priority areas were amended in June 2003 and will be targeted by programs receiving FY 03-04 funding. The new priority areas include: low birth weight, childhood lead poisoning prevention, child abuse/safety, preschool/childcare, and kindergarten readiness.)

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

Childcare Scholarship Program  
Developing Your Family Childcare Business  
Family Connections Home Visitation Program  
Head Start/Project Childcare Enrollment  
Clear Lake Learning Connection Program  
N-K Learning Connection Program  
Preschool Scholarship Program  
ABCD Project  
Parents As Teachers  
Sexual Abuse Treatment for Children and Parents  
Web-Based Immunization Registry  
D3 Indicator Research  
Little Cardinals Learning Connection Program  
Community Response Program

Childcare Scholarship Program offers assistance to families with a gross annual income between 140% and 185% of poverty guidelines. Scholarships up to \$2500 for a family with one child under the age of 6 and up to \$3500 for a family with more than one child under the age of 6. Families are responsible for 35% of their childcare payment.

Developing Your Family Childcare Business provided a class reunion with on-going training for the participants of the training sessions. The emphasis of the reunion class was to cover changes to the laws regarding home daycares.

Family Connections Home Visitation Program educates the family during pregnancy or families with children ages 0-5. Families design their own plan through the use of an "Individual Family Service Plan" tool and are assigned a Family Support Worker that matches their desired outcomes. This support worker visits the home on a regular basis that caters to the needs of the family.

Head Start/Project Child Care Enrollment provides Head Start children with full year, full day services in a comprehensive developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum/center.

Clear Lake, N-K, and Little Cardinals Learning Connection Programs provide weekly parent/child classes that support children's development during the early years of life and offer parents positive parenting knowledge and skills and build awareness of available community resources.

Preschool Scholarship Program offers assistance to families with a gross annual income below 185% of poverty guidelines. Scholarships will provide up to \$60 per month to cover preschool costs for children under the age of 6. Families are responsible for any monthly preschool cost that exceeds \$60 per month.

ABCD Project develops and implements a custom-designed creative drama curriculum for area preschool teachers through instructional classes for preschool teachers and by conducting classes at area preschools. A manual of lesson plans is in development.

Parents As Teachers provides parents with personal visits, parent meetings, screenings and linkages to a community resource network to help families lay a strong foundation for their child's development.

Sexual Abuse Treatment for Children and Parents provides weekly group treatment through Parents United for sexually abused children under the age of five and one non-offending parent.

Web-Based Immunization Registry provides a local immunization registry to assist public and private providers in tracking immunizations given and to improve the percentage of children who are appropriately immunized.

D3 Indicator Research collaborates with representatives from eight area organizations to update local indicators and recommend the priority areas to be targeted by the Empowerment Area beginning with fiscal year 03-04.

Community Response Program provides prevention, assessment and early intervention services to at-risk children ages 0-5 and their families through home visitation by a home advocate from Alternative Services.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Empowerment Area continues to bring together service providers from a variety of organizations to work together and to make them aware of services available. Current empowerment programs have made efforts to enhance services rather than duplicate programming. An example of on-going coordination of resources is United Way's Success By 6® initiative and the home visitation program, "Family Connections." The D3 Indicator Research project combined the efforts of several organizations to compile the "Empowerment Indicator Update Summary & Intervention Recommendations" which will guide the area and allow us to better target the needs of children and families. Area programs also collaborate in the search for identifying and obtaining alternate sources of funding. Empowerment board members serve on a variety of task forces, planning boards, and advisory committees and bring a wealth of information, as well as serve as an information dissemination method to our community.

## **Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment**

### **Counties in Area**

Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth and Sioux

### **Contact for Area**

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### **Vision and Mission**

Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment is committed to strengthening Community through loving, nurturing and responsible families, thereby providing security and success for children.

Parents of young children will have access to a seamless range of quality community services to assist them with the care and personal development of their children. Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment will work collaboratively with citizens, elected officials and community service providers to develop a system that addresses local and state mandated priorities relating to the positive physical and emotional development of area children.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

The Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment Board believes that as a result of our efforts:

All families living within the Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment area will have access to quality health, education and child care services, and will live in an environment that is conducive to reaching maximized growth potential. We believe the first years of life are crucial in the development of young children, the task of caring for these children is extremely important, and the manner in which services are rendered will make a dramatic difference in the rest of a child's life. It is the belief of this empowerment area that programming designed and implemented as a result of community partnering will markedly improve the lives of children and families and will eliminate barriers to necessary services.

There is empirical data from brain research that proves that early intervention services are crucial to improving the lives of children. Quality prenatal care and a positive nurturing environment have been proven to have a profound positive impact. The reverse is also true. Negative experience or the lack of a nurturing, caring environment has been proven to have a negative impact on children's lives that can have serious and life long negative effects.

Based on the above the two areas on which the community plan focuses are:

1. the promotion of and technical assistance for the provision of quality day care services in the four county area.
2. prevention home visitation programs that target expectant mothers and newborns in promoting a positive nurturing environment for infants and toddlers.

## **Local Indicators**

1. Number of individuals/parents indicating an increase in knowledge regarding early childhood development
2. Reduction in child abuse cases reported by welfare and justice providers
3. The number of individuals who apply for HAWK-I insurance program
4. Reduction in number of children in foster care
5. Number of Child Care Providers who have participated in professional development activities
6. On-site consultations for child care providers

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The services that are being provided are:

1. Benefits for Beginners which is a program designed as a response to the critical need for quality child care in our four county area. The mission of the program is to help child care providers, parents, and early childhood workers understand children's developmental stages and needs and to help caregivers improve their interaction techniques.
2. Healthy Families Northwest Iowa is a program which supports families of newborns. The goals of the Healthy Families program are to strengthen families and provide safe, nurturing environments in which children thrive.
3. Child Care Grants were awarded to 15 Child Care Programs in the four counties. The grants are to enable an increase in both quality and quantity.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

There continues to be increased collaboration and cooperation between the health, education and social service providers in the Empowerment area. Many are represented on the Board and have provided input and direction into the services provided. The Board Sub-Committees and Task Forces are made up of individuals from the four counties and from the various categories and disciplines represented on the Board. NICE is enrolled as a Medicaid provider in the Infant and Toddler program, thus works very closely with Early Access.

This year Empowerment was instrumental in assisting with the development of a contract between Healthy Families and Early Head Start in Sioux County. This contract enables the pre-natal services for Early Head Start to be provided by a Healthy Families Family Support Worker in accordance with the Early Head Start Performance Standards. However there is still a need for improved collaboration and coordination between Healthy Families and Early Head Start in two other counties.

This year Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment is participating in a Comprehensive Strategies process which has involved many individuals from a variety of agencies in the four county area. The collaboration and coordination that is taking place as agencies work together to identify the resources, the gaps in the service delivery system, and the needs in our four county area has been outstanding. The highest priority areas of need that have been identified are: substance abuse, parenting skills and child care.

## FMC Community Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Chickasaw, Floyd, Mitchell

### Contact for Area

Laurie Kristiansen, FMC Facilitator

P.O. Box 3, Nashua, IA 50658

Phone/Fax: 641-435-4435; email: [fmc@rconnect.com](mailto:fmc@rconnect.com) website:

### Vision and Mission

**Vision:** The Floyd, Mitchell, and Chickasaw (FMC) Community Empowerment area envisions that children, prenatal to school age, will live in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment in order to become successful and contributing members of our community. Families will be strengthened and empowered through support services leading to their self-sufficiency.

**Mission:** FMC Empowerment will work to provide assistance so that:

- Each child has a right to be safe, health, nurtured, and educated
- Families are the primary caregivers and educators of their children
- Working collaboratively results in eliminating barriers, meeting identified objectives, and utilizing resources more effectively.
- Programs and services will have a strong component of outcomes-based measurement for families and children that is realistic with success indicators that show directions.
- The community and families will be strengthened by the creation of new and the fostering of existing community-based partnerships between citizens, education, government, health, social services and any other individuals committed to the vision.

### Overview of Community Plan

FMC Empowerment's community plan is targeted to the 0-5 age group, preparing children to be ready for school and to also enhance community early childhood services. Accomplishments include:

- Offering a home visitation/parent education and support services program, Families Together.
- Funding preschool scholarships to 204 children at 16 preschools in the three-county area during FY 03
- Assisted in expanding and supporting Head Start Services in three counties.
- Offered innovative literacy programs for 0-5 children through EAGLE programming
- Continued and expanded a successful partnership with CCR&R/resource coordinator
- Offered a variety of services in three-county public health
- Established a collaborative effort with Floyd County Memorial Hospital Speech pathology
- Continued offering quarterly Community Advisory Forums

### Local Indicators

#### Parent Education and Support:

- Decrease in out-of home placements
- Decrease in confirmed child abuse and neglect cases
- Decrease in juvenile delinquency
- Increase in parental involvement of programs available

#### Maternal and Child Health:

- Increase in number of children with lead levels less than 1-0 mcq/df
- Increase in prenatal care during the first trimester
- Decrease in low birth weight
- Increase in post natal and well-baby checks

**Quality and Accessible Childcare:**

- Increase in number of trained, licensed/registered childcare providers
- Increase in number of available trainings for childcare providers
- Increase in number of slots available at licensed/registered childcare providers

**Early Childhood education:**

- Increase the number of children able to enroll in preschool in 3 counties through utilization of Empowerment preschool scholarships
- Increase enrollment in Head Start sites in three counties
- Increase in parents' opportunities to explore educational and family development activities
- Increase utilization of book bags for daycares and preschools

**Summary of Services Provided With Empowerment Funding**

**School Ready:**

- Head Start Services: Floyd/Mitchell, Chickasaw Counties
- Families Together: Home Visitation/parent education
- EAGLE: Early Literacy program for 0-5
- Preschool Scholarships: Scholarships for 16 area preschools
- Public Health: Programming for 0-5 and maternal/prenatal in FMC area
- Speech Pathology: Services for 0-5 with registered speech pathologist

**Early Childhood:**

- CCR&R: Collaborative agreement/resource coordinator in FMC area
- Minigrants: Qualifying providers receive points to redeem for product
- Provider Trainings: Variety of trainings offered to providers, preschools
- Provider Incentives: Programming for incentive care/revamping
- Daycare Scholarships: Daycare assistance/revamping to reinstitute
- Public Relations: Funding speakers' bureau, chamber memberships, event participation, web site development

**Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

In FY 03, the FMC Community Empowerment organization have made successful inroads in additional cooperative and collaborative partnerships in the three county area,. The focus continues on the 0-5 age, with partnerships that include: speech pathology, home health care, 15 area libraries, 16 preschools, community service organizations, and a collation of area school districts, to name a few.

# Family First Empowerment Area

Clarke County including the school districts of Clarke and Murray

Contact for area: Mary Jo Schade • 134 W Jefferson • Osceola, IA 50213  
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## Vision and Mission Statement

To proceed with old business in a new way through continued collaboration and mutual support that will diminish duplication and enhance the quality of life for all Clarke County residents. The Family First Empowerment Area (FFE) is dedicated to the mission of building healthy children, healthy families, and a healthy community. Family First believes that: every child has a right to reach his or her potential in school and in life; every child has a right to all services appropriate to meet the needs of that child; every family has a right to be a partner in this process; every family has a right to a productive and healthy life; the entire community has a responsibility to support families.

Family First believes that all families have access to adequate and appropriate services that support and promote healthy productive lives and; improve the well-being of families with young children; reduce unnecessary barriers to community efforts, encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children, increase the basic readiness levels of students entering school, increase the health status of children, reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, increase the access of children to an adult mentor, increase parental involvement with their children, increase the quality of accessibility of child care, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health and human service programs.

## Overview of Community Plan

Our community plan is to continue to reduce the gaps that were identified in our initial grant request. After hiring the Early Childhood Resource Specialist we are continuing to maintain and improve existing programs; initiate new services; increase public awareness of our programs; and provide leadership in early childhood education. Continuing our current programs is a top priority as public awareness has increased tremendously and our families are utilizing these services.

Clarke County Public Health	 <p>Early Childhood Resource Specialist connects Families with children 0-5 with.....</p>	DHS-FIP-FaDDS
Area Education Agency and Early ACCESS		SCICAP Community Action Agency
Over the Rainbow Preschool		Kiddie Karousel Preschool
Head Start/Early Head Start		Child Care Resource & Referral
Child and Adult Care Food Program		Community Center – Trolley
The Village Early Childhood Center		In Home Child Care Providers
Clarke Schools and Early Childhood Special Education		Murray Schools and Murray Preschool

## Local Indicators – Early Childhood/School Ready

Need	Local Indicators	State Indicators
Increase capacity and quality of child care in Clarke Count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase in number of registered child care providers/slots</li> <li>➤ Increase in number of licensed child care providers</li> <li>➤ Increase in number of accredited and child care and preschool programs</li> <li>➤ Increase in number of registered and licensed child care providers participating in training requirements</li> </ul>	Healthy Children (Birth to 5) Children Ready to Succeed in School Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments
Increase satisfaction with early childhood services in Clarke County including the increase of parent education of young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents as Teachers participation/parent survey</li> <li>➤ Child care provider satisfaction survey</li> <li>➤ Murray Preschool</li> <li>➤ Beginndergarten Bag/Teacher satisfaction</li> </ul>	Healthy Children (Birth to 5) Children Ready to Succeed in School Secure and Nurturing Families Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environment
Increase early literacy in Clarke County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase distribution of New Baby Bags (Books)</li> <li>➤ Increase awareness of Diversity Bags to be checked out by providers/centers</li> </ul>	Children Ready to Succeed in School Secure and Nurturing Families Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environment
Increase access to quality preschool experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase in number of children entering school who have had a preschool experience</li> <li>➤ Increase in number of scholarships available for preschool tuition and transportation assistance</li> </ul>	Children Ready to Succeed in School
Increase awareness of parents with newborns in community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase in percentages of identified newborns</li> </ul>	Healthy Children (Birth to 5) Safe and Supportive Communities Secure and Nurturing Families

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

- Early Childhood Resource Specialist
- Parents as Teachers Program
- Begindergarten Bags for all students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2003 at the Clarke and Murray Schools
- New Baby Bags for all identified newborns in Clarke County
- Murray Community Preschool Program in collaboration with Shared Visions
- Preschool scholarships for area preschools
- Transportation for preschools to and from centers
- Mini-grants for area preschools/centers
- Child Care Consultant providing assistance to child care providers in becoming registered
- Assist Child Care Resource & Referral and Child and Adult Care Food Program with required trainings/workshops
- National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day Luncheon
- Mini-grants to child care providers
- Assembling diversity bags for check out by home child care providers and centers

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes

We continue to believe our programs support our Vision and Mission statement. The Family First Empowerment Area is dedicated to the mission of building healthy children, healthy families, and a healthy community.

### Parents as Teachers

In our FY02 annual report we projected that our Parents as Teachers program would grow from 28 to 35 families in FY03. We achieved and surpassed this goal by serving 36 families reflecting a 29% growth, and of these families 18 have multiple children and 13 families are Hispanic. We made 461 home visits to 59 children.

### Preschool Tuition and Transportation Assistance

The "Children Ready to Succeed in School" state indicator is a top priority for the Family First Empowerment Area. Participation in the Preschool Tuition and Transportation Assistance programs increased when families became aware of these programs. We saw a 200% increase in the number of students receiving scholarships and a 360% increase in the number of rides provided for preschool students. We believe that has resulted in the number of students entering kindergarten without a preschool experience decreasing from 28% last year to 19% this fall.

### Begindergarten Bags

We assembled 131 "Begindergarten Bags" and distributed them during the Kindergarten round-ups at the Clarke and Murray schools in March. The materials included crayons, scissors, shapes, pencils, glue sticks, counting bears, a D'Nealian writing chart, lined paper to practice writing letters, paper with lines to practice cutting, and the handout "Understanding Children – Kindergarten Ahead" from the Extension office. Forty-six percent of parents returned evaluation forms and overwhelmingly support this project with many reporting their children's skills increasing. Many parents offered suggestions on more materials that they would like to see included in the bags that would assist them in getting their children prepared for Kindergarten.

### Child Care Providers

Clarke County registered family child care providers were given the opportunity to apply for developmentally appropriate materials specific to their individual needs. Seventeen of twenty-two providers applied for grants with ninety-four percent of those utilizing the funds. Six of six centers applied and received funding. Providers and centers reported that fifty-five percent of them purchased materials to enhance fine motor skills; fifty-five percent purchased materials to enhance gross motor skills; fifty-five percent purchased materials to encourage literacy; sixty-five purchased materials to encourage imagination and dramatic play; seventy-five percent purchased items to improve home safety; and eighty percent purchased materials to promote social and sharing skills. Our community honored child care providers on "National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day". The providers all reported they enjoyed the guest speakers and the opportunity to foster self-respect and professional confidence in their programs. Five providers attended the city council meeting to accept a proclamation for the National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day.



## **Lakes Area Decategorization/Empowerment Board**

### **Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, & Osceola Counties**

**CONTACT:** Cyndee Dather, Decat/Empowerment Coordinator  
1710 Gary Ave., Spirit Lake, IA 712-336-2555 cdather@dhs.state.ia.us

#### **Vision**

Our vision is that our community members will have a greater understanding of the needs of our families with young children, and that they all take part in supporting them. Our children will thrive and have the opportunity to live in a nurturing environment that is healthy, safe and stable. All community members and service providers will treat children and families with compassion and respect. Parents will be prepared to rear, teach, and love their children unconditionally, and children will be ready for life's challenges of school, relationships, and work. Quality and accessible childcare will be readily available to enable families to financially support themselves. In-home parent education services, comprehensive child care training, and in-home visitations of newborns and their parents are some of the essential services that will be provided in our community's support system to families with young children. Innovative and collaborative efforts amongst our community members and service providers will continue to insure the needs of children and families come first in an ever-changing environment.

#### **Mission**

"Providing services collaboratively to families and children from birth to 18 years of age for the purpose of improving the quality of life for families with children

#### **Overview of Community Plan**

The Lakes Area Decategorization/Empowerment Area is located in Northwest Iowa and is coterminous with Clay, Dickinson, Osceola and O'Brien counties. Like many rural areas, the communities have a strong history of interagency collaboration in maximizing scarce resources to better serve families and children. Members of community organizations have been meeting for four years to identify key issues facing the community and have determined how those issues might best be addressed to produce safe, supportive communities and to enhance the quality of life for Northwest Iowa families. Four major community needs impacting the 0-5 populations in these four counties were identified following 95 community meetings, combined with results of a broad-based survey completed by 350 community representatives. First, there is a major discrepancy between the number of children needing quality childcare/pre-school and the number of childcare/preschool slots available. Second, an alarming number of babies born in the four county areas have many health problems. Third there is a lack of in-home parent support services for all families. Fourth, there has been increased concern over the safety for children and families. These needs parallel the purpose of recent Empowerment Legislation and have created the impetus for construction of present programs.

#### **Local Indicators**

- Completion of basic immunization series by age 2
- Chemically abused infants
- Teen births
- Registered Homes/Licensed Centers
- Childcare Contacts
- Childcare provider participation in educational incentive programs
- Child Abuse
- Low birth-weight
- Lead exposure
- Scholarships/Preschool

## **Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

### Best care for Better Babies (*"Healthy Children-Home Visiting"*)

This program targets at-risk parents with children in the pre-natal or newborn phase and promotes optimum health and positive lifestyles for parents and children. A Universal Risk Assessment is conducted to provide early identification of at-risk families. Health professionals then conduct visits to voluntary participants' homes, focusing attention on the number of child abuse incidents, the number of chemically exposed infants, the number of children testing positive to lead exposure, the teen birth rate and other factors that jeopardize child and family health.

### Parents as Teachers & KIDS (*"Home Visitation and Parent Support"*)

A home-school-community partnership, constructed through collaborative efforts, provides parents with information on child development from birth to age five and suggests learning opportunities that encourage language, intellectual growth, physical and social skills. The partnership provides in-home family support services with varying intensity. The program sponsors group activities, provides early detection of potential problems through screenings, increases participation levels in PAT and KIDS (in-home nurturing programs) and helps parents access community resources. Professionals work with families who are challenged by critical issues such as poverty, limited literacy, and lack of problem-solving skills, inadequate parenting skills and a myriad of other socio-economic concerns.

### Childcare/ Preschool Environments (*"Consultants, Scholarships, Training"*)

Personalized home, childcare center or preschool visits by Early Childhood Education Consultants help caregivers understand what to expect at each stage of a child's development and offer practical tips on ways to encourage learning, manage challenging behavior and promote strong parent/caregiver relationships. Consultants work with In-home, Center and Pre-school childcare providers to enhance quality of child care services through direct educational technical assistance, mentoring, and support in addition to encouraging training that supports career and professional development. A Head Start model childcare center was developed and continues to meet the needs of children who were on a waiting list for Head Start and/or slightly over the guidelines. Mini-grants were awarded to childcare providers and preschools to purchase items that enhance their child care environment to provide age appropriate learning opportunities for young children that will prepare children for later success in school.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

- 75% of KIDS families reported increased confidence and competence in the parental role.
- 25% increase in the number of registered childcare providers
- 25 transportation scholarships were offered to children who otherwise would have not had a preschool experience.
- 71% of KIDS families reported improved family interactions.
- 10 Childcare Centers are in the process of being accredited by the NAYEC. With the exception of Head Start these centers there are the only centers in our area working on and or accredited.
- 5 Childcare providers received CDA credential and four received the National Apprenticeship certificate.
- 13% of pregnant women who smoked participated in prevention, education and smoking cessation activities.

## Clinton/Jackson Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Clinton and Jackson

### Contact for Area

Diane Martens, Coordinator  
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### Vision and Mission

Vision- We envision people of all ages in Clinton and Jackson County working together to support, nurture and empower all individuals towards creating productive, safe and healthy communities for our children and their families.

Mission- To develop and maintain a collaborative system of needs-based services, implemented at the earliest possible point of intervention, that strengthens families and communities.

### Overview of Community Plan

With the enactment of Empowerment Area legislation, in 1998, came the opportunity for the Clinton/Jackson Planning Council to focus efforts on our early childhood population, with a special emphasis on school readiness. Our Empowerment Plan included plans to provide:

- Opportunities for more children to attend school readiness programs by providing them with scholarships as well as expanding several Head Start classrooms to assist working parents;
- An expanded home visitation program for parents of newborns that offers parent education and support;
- Expanded daycare capacity in Clinton and Jackson County;
- Programs designed to educate and support area childcare providers in a variety of ways, including mini-grants to improve the quality and safety of childcare;
- Most recently a child caregiver conference has been successfully offered to child caregivers

In developing this plan, the board combined and coordinated the efforts of a wide array of public and private agencies, boards, programs, collaboratives, and state supported initiatives into one coordinated bi-county system of services. This collaborative structure combined multiple initiatives designed to promote collaboration, local planning, and local governance. The group devolved the area Decat Project, the Comprehensive Strategy Initiative,

Community Health Assessments, and Empowerment Area into one bi-county effort designed to address the serious problems facing our children and families. The planning process focused on addressing all children and their families, across the continuum. However, many efforts over the past three years have been targeted at applying this process specifically to children age 0-5 years.

### **Local Indicators**

The Empowerment board identified in FY03 that the outcomes that our programs were reporting did not coincide with state indicators. We were measuring several different outcomes but were not focused on specific indicators. In late spring representatives from the state empowerment board visited and provided a training to help make adjustments for FY04. The absence of a coordinator and transition issues have delayed the implementation of this.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

Partners in Parenting, Preschool Scholarships, Parent Aide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift Childcare, Head Start expanded classroom, Partners in Childcare, Child Care Health Consultant, Every Child Reads, Early Childhood FAST, Sunshine Child Care expanded hours, Caregivers Conference.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Caregivers Conference was a new addition this opportunity was well received. Caregivers appreciated having a local conference. Many agencies collaborated for this event; Clinton Community College, CACFP (Iowa East Central TRAIN & Operation New View), Child Care Resource and Referral, Partners in Child Care and Visiting Nurse Association.

## Dallas County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Dallas County

### Contact for Area

Sara Behn, Coordinator; Department of Human Services – 901 Court Street, Adel, IA 50003

Phone (515) 993-1717 Fax (515) 993-5829 E-mail [sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:sbehn@dhs.state.ia.us)

### Vision, Mission, and Overview of Community Plan

The Dallas County Empowerment Board's mission is to create effective community collaborations to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for all families with young children. Children will then arrive at school ready to learn and will reach their full potential. The long-term goal of the Dallas County Empowerment Board is to support all families in meeting their children's physical, emotional, social, and economic needs, which are essential to maximizing each child's learning potential. In 1999, the Dallas County Empowerment Board conducted a collaborative needs assessment process to identify priority issues for children age 0-5 and their families. This needs assessment involved review of local demographics, local agency service statistics, data available through county and state databases, and various parent surveys that had been conducted locally in recent years. Many different agencies and community constituents (including consumers) were involved in review and interpretation of the data, as well as in the identification of priority issues to be addressed through empowerment activities.

During the past 3 fiscal years, the Early Child Coalition (ECC) for a Family Resource Center in Perry has been meeting to develop a central facility of preschool, child care, health, and resource services. A professional planning group called Concordia, Inc. was hired by several local entities to facilitate community discussions and conclusions for the vacated Perry Middle School. As a result, the ECC has combined with the All Aboard in Perry sustainability group to form a community foundation. The board has interest in renovating the building for a Family Resource Center.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding and Local Indicators

#### Lack of access to early prenatal care and follow-up services for all mothers and their families.

The percentage of women giving birth who received prenatal care in the first trimester and women who received adequate prenatal care: Early intervention before, during, and after a pregnancy, including the provision of educational, nutritional, and psycho-social support in addition to medical care, is associated with lower rates of adverse outcomes such as child abuse/neglect, infant mortality, premature birth, low birth weight, and fetal alcohol syndrome. The needs assessment results suggested that early and on-going access to prenatal care is not assured for all women in Dallas County.

Dallas County is undergoing two demographic changes that are challenging the already stressed existing maternal, and child health problems. First, the number of births to county residents has increased by 24% since 1993 (425 births in 1993 to 527 births in 1998, and 526 births in 2001), increasing the overall need for services for pregnant women. Secondly, since 1994, both the number and percentage of Hispanic births in the county has nearly tripled. In 1994, there were 22 Hispanic births, accounting for 5% of total births in the county. By 1998, there were 69 Hispanic births in Dallas County, representing over 13% of all births. In 2000, another 69 Hispanic births representing about 12% of total births. Language and culture barriers, low education and income levels, and the uninsured status of many of these families place them at greater risk.

Percentage of low birth weight births and infant mortality rate: The incidence of both has elevated in recent years. Using the five-year averages, the percentage of births in Dallas County which are at a low birth rate (less than 5 lb. 5 oz, or 2500 grams) is higher than the state average. Likewise, the five-year average infant mortality rate for Dallas County is higher than the most recent statewide annual average.

Number of home visits provided to high risk pregnant and post-partum women: Community Opportunities, the regional Community Action Agency, headquarters outside the county and provides minimal maternal health services in Dallas County. At monthly satellite clinics, Community Opportunities offers family planning, WIC, and some child health services. The current home visiting service currently available is Early Head Start, serving 12 families.

School Readiness: The county needs assessment revealed that assessment and tracking of school-readiness among kindergartners is inconsistent across the county. Schools that conduct assessments use a variety of different tools; some only assess children who appear to have difficulties, others do no screening at all.

Family self-sufficiency: In Dallas County, 19.8% or 653 children age 0-5 live in families with incomes at or below 185% of poverty. About 25% of all births that occur in the county are to women who depend on Medicaid for health coverage.

### **Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

HOST (Healthy Opportunities Starting Today) – A voluntary in-home visitor program designed to provide support to expecting and new parents in Dallas County. The referrals can come from many entities including DHS, schools, and word-of-mouth. The Home Visitor is responsible for visiting the family regularly, depending on the family's desires and needs. A Family Support Worker offers information and services related to preparing for a baby, what developmental milestones to expect, budgeting and finances, effective and age-appropriate discipline, education, employment, and links to community resources. Due to the high population of Hispanic immigrants, two of the three FT staff is bilingual. HOST serves about 50 families per year, of which 39 (70%) are Hispanic families.

Child Care Resource and Referral – The Child Care Coordinator provides services to caregivers, parents, and the community to increase the capacity, and improve the quality, of child care for all families in Dallas County. CCR&R is committed to responding to the needs of the community for accessible and affordable quality child care by providing resources, education, and advocacy for children, parents, child care-givers, and employers in Dallas County. Examples of services to caregivers include ChildNet certification, trainings and workshops specific to centers, in-home providers and infant caregivers. Parent referrals who are looking for child care are processed in the Polk County CCR&R office.

Child Advocacy Council (CAC) – The Empowerment Board provides support to the Dallas County Child Advocacy Council. The mission of the Council is to eliminate child abuse in the county. In FY 2002 and FY 2003, Prevention Concepts, Inc. has been contracted to provide coordination of the CAC's meetings, minutes, mailings, fundraisers, recruitment of volunteers and members, grant-seeking, and other coordination efforts.

Family Resource Center Planning Services – The planning and development of a Family Resource Center are currently a partnership of Empowerment, other entities, and local community members who have created a community foundation called All Aboard in Perry (AAIB). The AAIB board has secured funding for a structural feasibility study of the old Middle School in Perry and recently submitted a pre-application for the Community Development Block Grant.

Early Childhood Mini-Grants - In FY 03, the Empowerment Board provided mini-grants to Perry Day Care for assistance with preschool and child care costs, and to Head Start for transportation.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

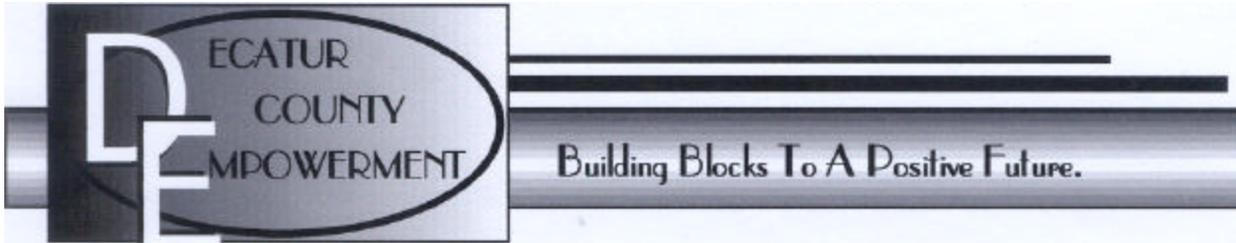
HOST Program: The "HOPES"-like home visitor program began in November of 2000 with a Family Assessment Worker and a Family Support Worker. Today the program has added another FT position due to the increased need for services. The project goal in FY 02 was to complete the Parents As Teachers (PAT) training and implement a more structured approach for parents. This has been accomplished. Fifty (50) families were served with home visits including the PAT curriculum in FY 03.

Center for Child Care Resources: Since the program began in March of 2000, the number of identified child care slots in Dallas County has increased by **302** slots, with **2** new centers opening. There are now **608** spaces available in Dallas County for infants among centers and home providers. The number of group training sessions offered in Dallas County to providers increased from **8 to 68** to 755 providers. *So Many Rewards*, an incentive program for providers to get providers registered with the State, helped four new providers get started. A Home Consultant provided support through **48** home visits, and offered a series on infant massage.

Child Advocacy Council: The Council has historically has needed a person with enough time to recruit volunteers and board members, complete minutes and send meeting reminders. The Empowerment Board believed it was necessary to take action in order to keep the Council going. Empowerment contracts with Prevention Concepts, Inc. as a community agency to fulfill the coordination role. The Council has received a Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Grant to be used in collaboration with ISU Extension to provide a "Strengthening Families" and "Celebrate Families" series for Dallas County families. The council is currently seeking grant application to provide the "Family Story Teller" literacy series for families. Other planning activities includes the Blue Ribbon campaign, a Health and Safety Fair, and other means of fundraising for the "Parenting Pipeline" and "Centsible Parenting" newsletters.

Family Resource Center Planning Services: The Early Childhood Coalition has teamed up with All Aboard in Perry to continue planning efforts for the Family Resource Center, scheduled to be in the Perry Middle School. An assessment has been conducted for programming the community believed was appropriate for the Family Resource Center. The results demonstrated a need for health services for under or uninsured families, infant and child care, Head Start, and family educational resources. The City and County support the efforts of the Board and planning committee. The City of Perry and All Aboard in Perry have partnered to submit a pre-application for the Community Development Block grant.

Early Childhood Mini-grants: The Empowerment Board received additional funding in FY 02 and again in FY 03. Once the current programs were assured a suitable budget, the Empowerment Board set up a Request for Proposal process to provide early childhood scholarships for child care assistance, preschool assistance, transportation, staff training, and other items to be considered. It proved to be helpful for over 50 families in Dallas County, primarily for Head Start's transportation costs, and Perry Day Care's Play and Learn Program participants.



### Counties in Area

Decatur County and a portion of Clarke, Lucas, Ringgold, and Wayne Counties

### Contact for Area

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### Vision and Mission

To provide quality service programs for all children and families within the Decatur County Empowerment Area, inclusive of Central Decatur, Lamoni, and Mormon Trail School Districts. It is the vision of this empowerment area to foster healthy, nurturing, safe communities which will launch our children on a successful life course. Building upon existing collaborative efforts, it is always our intention to provide excellent services with quality and kindness.

### Overview of Community Plan

Building on the collaborative model, the Decatur County Empowerment Area supported real working relationships between established agencies such as The Family Place, Decatur County Public Health, Positive Parenting, Green Valley Area Education Agency, Head Start and Child Care Resource and Referral to provide needed services to children birth to five and their families. The Decatur County Empowerment Area believes the motto *"Together we are Strong."*

### Local Indicators

- A. Early Childhood Environments will improve in our Empowerment area.
- The number of students and direct contact hours of three and four year olds will increase in Head Start and early childhood classrooms.
  - The percentage of students entering kindergarten who have attended an early childhood classroom will increase.
- B. Increase in quality and accessibility of child care
- The number of licensed/registered childcare slots in the Decatur County Empowerment area will increase in the trend line within the next five years
  - Expand the number of infant/toddler slots available within the area
- C. Health
- The immunization percentage of children will increase by age two in the empowerment area
  - The teen birth rate for the empowerment area will decline, moving below the state average within the next five years
  - Child abuse rate of confirmed cases will decline within the empowerment area
  - The percentage of low-birth-weight babies will decline over the next five years
- D. Parent Education and Support
- The percentage of parents volunteering and participating in classroom activities will increase
  - The percentage of parents who access parenting/community resources will increase

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

### School Ready Programs

- 3 Pre School Programs (Central Decatur, Mormon Trail and Lamoni School Districts)
- Pre School Coordinator (Head Start)
- Parents as Teachers program for 45 families (The Family Place)

### Early Childhood Funding

- Book bags for child care providers
- Every Child Reads
- Provider grants

### Baby Bags

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The foundation of collaboration that began in 1999 has grown stronger in Decatur County due to the continued efforts of all involved with the Empowerment Area. The Decatur County Empowerment Area is indeed a presence, a provider, and a supporter of children and families in Decatur County as displayed by the following: The Empowerment Board: The board membership represents the entire geographic area of Decatur County, regular quarterly meetings are held with strong attendance.

Pre Schools: Significant new ground was covered when the established agencies of Head Start and three public school systems worked together to provide early childhood education to fifty three children in Decatur County. These children otherwise would have had limited access to any type of pre school. The number of children served has increased and a look at quarterly reports reveals a variety of experiences being provided trips to the zoo, Des Moines Science Center and pumpkin patch. Experiences close to home such as a visit to an apple orchard...help to build all important community links in children's minds at an early age. These experiences taking place in a formal pre school setting are not only fun but also assist students to improve in the areas of motor skills, concepts, and language skills, as documented by Dial 3 Developmental Testing resulting a 20% increase in test scores.

Parent Education (The Family Place): The Parents as Teachers program is designed to empower all parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Parents are their child's first and most important teachers. This voluntary program establishes a support system for parents and accomplishes this through the four components of the program: monthly, bi-weekly or at-risk weekly home visits, group parent meetings, screenings for children, and creating a resource network families can access. Helping families learn and access other services available to them within the community and county is the goal of creating a one-stop-shop resource network accessed through The Family Place. The number of certified Parents as Teachers parent educators has increased to five and the number of families reached with parent education has now reached over sixty. The Department of Human Services has linked with The Family Place to provide parenting skills via the PAT program. In addition, the program also includes specialized services for teen parents as well as a weekly teen parent support group for parenting and pregnant teens.

Head Start Screening & Recruitment: April 11 the following agencies (Head Start, Early Head Start, Public Health, Empowerment Preschools, Decatur County Sheriff, Lions Club and Positive Parenting) worked together to provide a coordinated evaluation and service program to replace the annual Child Fair. The Child Fair has been discontinued through AEA 14 because of funding issues.

### Additional Early Childhood Highlights Include:

- Thematic book bags incorporating Every Child Reads were delivered to home and center-based childcare providers. The book bags have the Every Child Reads concept laced through out the bag content. The bag starts with a book(s) , and builds the contents for the book. An instructional outline was designed for each individual book for ways to promote early literacy and language for providers to use when interacting with children.
- Baby Bags delivered by Public Health during well baby checks.
- Every Child Reads: Eighteen participants from early childhood care centers were trained in the Every Child Reads program. The 15 hour training included developmentally appropriate information on reading, language, and writing for children 0-5.



## **Caring CommUNITY**

Des Moines and Louisa County Empowerment  
22921 135<sup>th</sup> Street, Danville, IA 52623

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4230

e-mail: [CaringCommUNITY@msn.com](mailto:CaringCommUNITY@msn.com)

phone: 319/759-6244, fax: 319/392-

### **Vision**

The vision of Caring CommUNITY Empowerment is a safe, stable, nurturing community where individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential

### **Mission**

Our mission is to make our vision a reality by facilitating the collaboration of public and private enterprises in partnership with families.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

During Fiscal Year 2003, the Caring CommUNITY Board reviewed the original Plan and found that much of it is still pertinent. However, the Board updated the plan to recognize gains that have been made in some key areas and the challenges that have not yet been overcome. Specifically, data shows that our initial critical need for licensed/registered child care spaces has been mostly met. Accordingly, the Plan has refocused on quality. The Board, County Advisory Committees and Strategic Planning Committee believe the current providers will need some time and encouragement to step up the quality of the care they provide.

In addition, the Board has realized there is still some work to do defining “a coordinated system of early childhood care and education” and that until we define it for ourselves it is difficult to move toward it. We still feel that we have a series of services and supports and while there is much more networking done between these, they are still not a “system.”

Finally, there is a strong feeling of frustration that we have not reduced the incidence of child abuse in our area. We are struggling to define how we can best meet this critical need.

The Board still advocates for continuous improvements across delivery systems, continues to reach out to the community to identify gaps and opportunities for initiation of new or improved services, continues to strive to meet the needs identified by the community, encourages effective decision making throughout the process, and emphasizes collaboration between agencies.

With the continuing budget cuts in other funding streams, we find that programs that we have been funding for the last couple of years are not able to sustain themselves without Empowerment funds. Community response to these programs has been extremely positive. For these two reasons, the Board has maintained the programming and is working to find additional resources to continue implementing the Plan. Specifically, we applied for a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant. If approved, these funds will provide a Community Coordinator who will be a family advocate, a resource person for agencies and for faith-based organizations, and who will help the community develop a case management program for families with multiple barriers to success. In addition, this grant will allow us to implement several literacy initiatives, add a preschool in the rural part of our service area, begin to apply the ITERS and ECHERS rating scales to our child care facilities, and provide additional training and resources to increase the quality of child care.

### **Local Indicators**

The following local core indicators were incorporated into our plan in addition to the State indicators. Some of the indicators noted below may seem inappropriate for programs that deal with children under the age of six and their families, however, we strongly feel that if families receive needed services and supports at this early stage, the benefits will be felt throughout the lifecycle. Percentage of Kindergarten children who attended Pre-School/Head Start

- Number of licensed/registered child care spaces
- Number of licensed preschool spaces
- # of child care spaces for Special Needs Children

- Number of children under 185% of poverty receiving child care assistance
- Domestic/family violence incidence
- Percentage of mothers not receiving care in first trimester
- Percentage of estimated eligible enrolled in HAWK-I/Medicaid
- Percentage of families referred by Family Specialists to services who follow-up with those services
- Percentage of families with newborns participating in Home Visitor Programs
- Divorce Rate
- High School Drop Out Rate
- Fourth Grade Reading Levels

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

FY 2003 was the third year our Empowerment Area received School Ready funding. The services provided with these funds include:

Newborn Home Visitor Program in Des Moines County	Special needs preschool in Louisa County
Parent Education in both counties	A Nest Program in each county
A preschool in each county	

Our Early Childhood programs included:

Child care/ preschool Vendor Vouchers	ChildNet training for child care providers
Special Needs Child Care Coordinator	Expansion of infant child care spaces in Louisa County
Family Specialists in both counties	Child Care Provider Training
Quality Improvement grants to providers.	

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Caring CommUNITY Empowerment Board reviewed their committee structure to see how they could improve the functioning of the Board and increase input from other community members. Most Board committees now have members who are not members of the Empowerment Board. Each committee has specific responsibilities and reports to the Board. The Board takes action based on the committees’ recommendations. Under the new structure, the Board is able to get a wider viewpoint and still operate efficiently.

Early in FY2003, the Board recognized the importance of the business/industry community to achieving our Vision and Mission. In an effort to engage them in our efforts, we joined the local Chamber of Commerce. We have previously invited the leadership of the Chamber to events without success. However, in March we held an Early Childhood Summit to share a report card on our community and to open a dialogue. Chamber members attended and were awed with the needs in our community. Sam Carrell from the Number One Question provided the keynote address and was able to show the Chamber members how well our efforts work with theirs. We were given an opportunity to submit information to the Chamber and subsequently received a Recognition Award.

Since our designation as an Empowerment Area in July of 2000, we have struggled with a way to measure our success in preparing children for school. Many of our school districts used differing tools to measure kindergartner’s readiness to learn and some did not use any. We did not have a way to aggregate the information that existed. Through the efforts of our Board members, we now have one tool, administered by one agency, aggregating the data and reporting it to the Board. In future years, we hope to link a survey of services received with the test results to determine which services are most helpful in preparing children to learn.



**Name of Community Empowerment Area**  
Dubuque County Empowerment

**Counties in Area**  
Dubuque

**Contact for Area**  
Sherri Edwards, (563) 583-1037 (voice), sedward24@aol.com  
(official address for Empower Dubuque available soon)

**Vision and Mission**

Vision: The Dubuque County Empowerment Board will ensure that all children are healthy and successful.

Mission: The Dubuque County Empowerment Board builds public commitment and works collaboratively with the community to ensure access to high-quality childcare, health care, and family services for all children and families in Dubuque County.

**Overview of Community Plan**

- To gather broad community input on needs of families with children 0–5.
- To provide community constituencies with information regarding families' needs.
- To serve as a clearinghouse for information and a planning body for activities related to children aged 0-5.
- To provide community education to increase public knowledge about Empowerment and child development.
- To identify strategies (best practice alternatives) to meet needs identified in the assessment (objective #1).
- To maintain a strong board and committee structure that provides leadership to achieve our goals.

**Local Indicators**

1. Increase number of childcare slots providing quality care – # of infant slots; # on rating scale of providers on the ITERS, ECERS, and FDRS; # of staff turnover; # of registered providers; # of providers transitioned to Child Development Homes; % of providers visited during transition to Child Development Homes; # of providers who accessed available training opportunities; # of newly registered providers who received business kits and associated training; # of pieces of safety equipment distributed to providers; # of providers utilizing best practice models.
2. Increase access/availability of quality childcare – # of children impacted by quality improvement grants; # attendees at special needs training; # of children who received respite care; # of children who received preschool scholarships; # of children who received books and literacy materials; # of non-registered providers who became registered providers; # of providers who became registered; # of safety items given out through safety grants.
3. Increase business involvement with childcare issues – # of businesses that support policies that allow parents flexibility to provide care for their children; # of businesses partnering with Empowerment as it relates to childcare; # of new childcare sites development or new linkages between business and current sites as a type of consortium.
4. Increase immunization rate and well-child screenings – # of children who received well-child screenings at periodic intervals; # of children who received immunizations; % 2-year old immunization rate; % immunizations compliant; % data from well-child screening survey of private physicians conducted by City Health Specialist Office; % immunization compliance at private physician from well-child screening survey; # of children with health insurance; # of children who received Early ACCESS screenings.
5. Increase the number of pregnant women who receive prenatal care – # of low weight births; # of women giving birth who received prenatal care.
6. Reduction in the child abuse and neglect rates – # confirmed child abuse reports; # of families participating in family home visiting programs.
7. Improvement in school readiness of children by age – # of children who received developmental screening.
8. Early identification and referral of children identified for special education/special needs – # of children identified for Special Education/Special Needs services; # of referrals made.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

Empower Dubuque operates four successful programs:

1. Parents As Teachers (PAT), which is a home-school community based parenting program designed to provide parents of young children (prenatal to age 5) with the information and support needed to give their children the best possible start in life.
2. Early Childhood, which is a program that provides grants to licensed centers and newly registered family daycare providers who agree to increase capacity and quality care. The program also includes preschool scholarships, respite, training opportunities, and providing parenting information to agencies in the community.
3. Kindergarten Assessment, which is a data collection tool administered in the fall to kindergartners in Dubuque County. It is designed to track school readiness and identify needs of young children.
4. Child Health Programs, which are administered in two parts: a) Clarke College's student nursing program provides intervention, supplies, and linkage to medical providers for high-risk families, and b) the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) provides financial assistance for medical visits for uninsured children aged 0-5 years.

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

In Dubuque County, a strong foundation of collaboration exists. Representatives from social services, health, education, faith, and business serve on the Empowerment Board and participate in committees. Committee representatives include AEA, VNA, all school districts, DHS, Early ACCESS, Head Start, Child Health Specialty Clinic, Bright Beginning, and Even Start. This year, Empower Dubuque strived to establish a community presence; enhance strategic planning; facilitate collaborative efforts; assess gaps in service; and support high-quality programs for children aged 0-5.

At the board level, public relations efforts included a web site, promotional video, and speaker's bureau. The goal was to increase name recognition and educate citizens on Empowerment. The Long-Range Planning Committee assisted committees in an update of the Comprehensive Plan intended to improve measurable outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of programming efforts. The group has continued to build on the current system of services by continuously seeking input and involvement from the community. The Long-Range Planning Committee also examined community-planning models to promote collaboration. So far, the group has reviewed America's Promise. Related activities included receiving training and technical assistance plus hosting several community forums to educate the public on the effort. Consideration of collaboration models right for Dubuque is still on ongoing process.

The School Ready/Health Committee reviewed successful programs and areas of need in the community. They identified high priority areas and plan to address these soon. Accomplishments included coordinating a Kindergarten Assessment tool to collect data on kindergartners in the county. This was a collaborative effort by all school districts. In addition, board and committee representatives became involved in planning a federally qualified community health care center. Participants came together in an effort to meet identified health needs of area citizens. If a grant is approved, the center will provide comprehensive primary health care services. Finally, PAT partnered with Early ACCESS to provide training and service coordination to children, ensuring a seamless system for families. All associated parties have worked together to identify needs, goals, and necessary services as well as to enhance the administration process.

The Early Childhood Task Force focused on infant capacity; access to quality childcare; training opportunities; a literacy project; and a business consortium. This year, 162 infant slots were created, and a committee has been reviewing infant capacity issues. Home consultants have continued to promote registration for providers, supporting existing providers and those new to the process. With special needs as a top priority, a training committee created a full training calendar, often utilizing local experts for presentations. The respite program grew in response to a great need for this service. The task force provided preschool scholarships to 22 children who were not able to attend without financial help. Additionally, the task force provided books and literacy materials to families who otherwise could not afford these. Finally, a Human Resources consultant was hired to facilitate a consortium of businesses interested in childcare issues. Results of that consortium included greatly improved linkage between businesses and existing childcare centers to determine how to work together to address childcare concerns.



# Emmet County Community Empowerment Area



**Contact:** Cyndee Dather, Empowerment Coordinator  
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*Our vision is to build, through community collaboration, an environment that empowers and supports the well-being of all children and families in Emmet County.*

## Overview of Community Plan

Emmet County is an extremely rural county, with a population of less than 11,500, and the largest city comprising over half of the total population. Per capita, Emmet County demonstrates extreme needs. Compared to the State of Iowa, Emmet County averages are higher in every category from unemployment rate and children living in poverty to teen births, low birth weight infants, and confirmed child abuse cases.

Community assessments revealed three major areas to which Emmet County needed to focus its attention. These areas became the targets of Empowerment's efforts: 1) improving the quantity and quality of child development and child care activities, 2) providing public pre-school experience 3) providing support services to the Emmet County's young children and their families.

In response to these needs Emmet County Empowerment implemented three major projects: Parent Support and Networking (more commonly know as SMILES), Child Care Initiative, and a grant to support a public pre-school program at the Estherville Lincoln Central and Armstrong Ringstead Schools. The goal of these programs is to increase supports and services for young children and their caretakers in order to achieve positive outcomes of the identified needs.

## Local Indicators

- ◆ Families have access to adequate numbers of quality, registered childcare providers
- ◆ Childcare providers participate in trainings and professional development opportunities
- ◆ Childcare providers engage in continuing environmental improvement activities
- ◆ Families and children have a medical home
- ◆ Children receive regular well-child exams
- ◆ Pregnant women receive adequate care during the first trimester
- ◆ Women follow medical recommendations throughout pregnancy
- ◆ Teen parent pregnancy rates are decreasing
- ◆ First-time mothers are attending prenatal classes
- ◆ Community resources are focused on family and children's problems
- ◆ Parents respond appropriately to their child's needs
- ◆ Parent's exhibit a positive social support system
- ◆ Children's development is screened at the earliest opportunity
- ◆ Young parents are engaged in educational and/or vocational support activities
- ◆ Children have the opportunity to attend preschool at age 4
- ◆ Children demonstrate improved developmental readiness upon completion of preschool
- ◆ Children demonstrate increased proficiency on literacy measures upon entering Kindergarten
- ◆ Parents are involved in structured parent activities
- ◆ Children are screened at the earliest opportunity for identification of special needs
- ◆ Children are immunized according to professional recommendations by age 2
- ◆ Families exhibit increased knowledge of Hawk-I and Medicaid programs

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

### ★ Parent Support and Networking(SMILES)

- ◆ Prenatal and Postnatal Home Visits and Immunization promotion
- ◆ Weekly family support visits through KIDS
- ◆ Parent education meetings
- ◆ Structured network for client referrals and links to community resources



### ★ Child Care Initiative

- ◆ Support groups for Child Care Providers
- ◆ Visitation to day care providers, offering support, resources, and training opportunities
- ◆ Incentive programs for providers who become registered or serve “at-risk” populations
- ◆ Assistance/Support to individuals interested in providing childcare

### ★ Armstrong-Ringstead Public Preschool/Head Start

- ◆ Scholarships for children to attend preschool who do not meet Head Start guidelines
- ◆ Library, music, and physical education classes for the preschool children
- ◆ Early screenings for hearing, speech, sight, height, and weight
- ◆ Services to link parents and/or their children with resources concerning a variety of issues
- ◆ Mentor program between high school and preschool students

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes

Parent Support and Networking operates under a program known as SMILES (**S**haring **M**oments **I**n the **L**ives of **E**very family is **S**pecial). Four agencies have combined efforts with Empowerment to make SMILES a successful home visitation program. The agencies involved are: Emmet County Public Health, Lakeland Area Education Agency (AEA) III-KIDS, Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC), and Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO)-WIC. The four agencies offer a “wrap-around” service, where needs are assessed and addressed (through support or personal referrals) by any of the four agencies to one another. The Parent Support and Networking project also collaborates with the local hospital, Even Start, and the Estherville-Lincoln Central School District.

The Child Care Initiative (CCI) is a collaborative effort between UDMO-Child Care Resource and Referral and Empowerment. The Child Care Consultant works closely with the Department of Human Services, Lakeland AEA, and Iowa State Extension Services, who provide referrals and information and can utilize the assistance of the Consultant when working with providers.

The Armstrong-Ringstead School District has connected with Empowerment to collaborate in an effort to provide a public preschool program to all children in that district. This public preschool is modeled after Head Start and receives support and guidance from Head Start as well.

Home-based services both to families and childcare providers have increased, as well as heightened educational opportunities for young children. Parents have enhanced their parenting skills by learning about child development with a hands-on approach via the in-home services. The Childcare Initiative has successfully recruited over 40 registered providers to Emmet County and this number continues to grow. As part of a community education project twenty-four childcare providers, parents and community members participated in a local daylong early childhood conference.

Funds were allocated to Emmet County Public Health to develop a prenatal education program for Hispanic families in the community. Educational materials were located and assembled for the program's classes. An interpreter was secured and is a vital link between the project and participants. The interpreter also assisted in translating during the postnatal home-visiting program. Word of mouth in the Hispanic community is opening the doors for the nurse to reach out to other Hispanic families in the community.

## Corner Counties Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Fremont and Page Counties

### Contact for Area

Jennifer Thompson, Coordinator  
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712-374-3367 (phone) 712-374-2431 (fax)  
wcdcfre@iowatelecom.net

### Vision and Mission

Vision: Working cooperatively with all interested parties and providers in our area, Corner Counties Empowerment area will attempt to provide seamless support for every child in Page and Fremont Counties from birth through age five.

Mission: The Corner Counties Empowerment Area (CCEA) will support their communities in nurturing children so they arrive at school safe, healthy, socially well adjusted and ready to learn.

### Overview of Community Plan

In support of our mission and vision, and based on our needs assessment data, CCEA provides support for children in Page and Fremont Counties.

To that end, the Board attempts to:

- Improve the availability of child care within the area
- Improve the quality of child care within the area by working directly with providers
- Assist parents in accessing quality child care
- Provide in-home parent support for at risk families
- Provide pre-school opportunities for all children within the area
- Provide educational opportunities for parents of young children and their service providers

### Local Indicators

- # of registered home child care providers
- # of licensed child care centers
- # of pre-school slots available
- # of Head Start slots available
- % of children entering kindergarten with pre-school experience
- # of children enrolled in Hawk-I of potential eligible
- # of children enrolled in Medicaid of potential eligible
- Rate of confirmed child abuse/neglect
- #/% of families who resides in the area participating in a home visiting/family support program

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

Through collaboration with West Central Development Corporation (Community Action Agency) and Early Childhood (EC) funds, CCEA has funded a CCR&R Child Care Specialist 10 hours a week to assist child care providers, daycares and pre-schools. This position also oversees and helps families with the Child Care Assistance program, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift incentive funding to providers, enrichment grants to centers and pre-school tuition grants. EC funds were also used to aid Our House Child Development Center send 7 of their child care staff to CDA training. Three of the pre-schools in Fremont County were significantly affected by the loss of Decat funds in our area. CCEA, using EC funds, was able to pick up some of the slack left by Decat so our pre-schools could keep their doors open.

School Ready (SR) funds were used most significantly to fund two home visitation programs, HOPES (Healthy Families of America) and Growing Strong Families (Parents as Teachers). SR funds were also used to fund our local Stork's Nest Program for inventory and the child fair that our area has done for the last three years. The child fair was another service that was formerly funded by Decat funds. Another large portion of our SR funds were used to fund pre-school tuition slots.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Bright and Beautiful Beginnings (B&BB) Program, which includes the HOPES, intensive home visitation program and the Welcome Baby Program, was funded by CCEA in the amount of \$61, 457.33. This supported two 20 hour/week staff. HOPES visited 31 clients and made a total of 1,137 home visits. The Welcome Baby Program visited 106 homes. They estimate they saw 50% of the babies born. Their cost per visit was figured at \$47.45. The B&BB program had many in kind donations made. They include: formula, baby food, hygiene products, clothing, Christmas presents, homemade quilts, cribs, cash, rent, welcome baby packets (coupons, free items, etc.) and volunteer hours totaling 78. There are many community partners involved in this project who donate time, money and items to help make it successful.

The Growing Strong Families (GSF) Program (Parents as Teachers, Iowa State University Extension Nutrition and Resource Management research based information) was funded by CCEA in the amount of \$39, 513.31. This supported 3 staff-one 30 hour/week in Fremont County and two 20 hour/week in Page County. GSF visited 90 families in two counties, 36 in Fremont County and 54 in Page County. These 90 families included 130 children. 612 home visits were completed, 267 in Fremont County and 345 in Page County. 62 Ages and Stages Questionnaires (Developmental Screening) were completed with 31 of them being done in each county. There were 2 developmental delays detected and they were referred to the Area Education Agency-AEA 13. GSF estimates that their cost per visit is \$64.56. The GSF program has a very strong partnership with ISU Extension and its staff. GSF also collaborates with the Stork's Nest to provide education for its participants on occasion.

CCEA funded one .25 FTE Child Care Resource and Referral Child Care Development Specialist totaling \$20,188. This staff person is employed by West Central Development Corporation in conjunction with the Empowerment Board. 17 providers took advantage of the educational totes and the So Many Rewards program which is estimated to have served 102 children. The cost per child is estimated to be \$58 per child. The Child Care Development Specialist provided a Training Day for providers of which 30 area home providers attended, which impacted 180 kids, with a cost of \$14 per child. The Child Care Development Specialist also managed the preschool tuition grants, child care assistance, center grants, and weekend and extended day grants for the CCEA Board. There was an increase of 11% in Registered providers (25 in '02 and 28 in '03). There was an increase in non-registered providers of 37% (33 in '02 and 52 in '03). There was a 20% decrease in licensed preschools/centers/head starts there were 12 in '02 and 10 in '03.

The Stork's Nest Program was funded \$7,500 for inventory. The Stork's Nest is another program contained under the umbrella of Bright & Beautiful Beginnings. There were 92 participants with 101 children. The estimated cost per family is \$81.52 and \$74.26 per child. Here are some of the results from the Enrollment Survey: 70% of the moms were smokers, 30% were smoking after enrollment, 79% received pre-natal care. Here are some of the results from the Post Delivery survey given to the participants: 47% breast fed their babies, 83% of the fathers were involved, 31% used tobacco in the last 3 months before the baby was born, 38% smoked after the baby was born, 53% attended prenatal classes. The Stork's Nest received in kind donations in the form of: store space, clothing, formula, homemade quilts, store discounts, cash contributions, and Administrative hours. There were a total of 224 volunteer hours given to the program.

There were a total of 61 children in 8 Preschools who received some form of Preschool Tuition assistance. Twenty-six children received Child Care Assistance through 6 child care providers.

The Corner Counties Empowerment Child Fair was once again a huge success. Due to lack of funding there was only one fair held for both counties. There were 611 participants signed in, 294 of these were children. This 611 does not include workers and those who did not register. 62% of the children registered were from Page County (182), 21% from Fremont County (62) with the remaining 17% coming from Montgomery and Pottawattamie Counties (50). A car seat inspection through Iowa SAFE Kids inspected 55 seats, 31 of which were either incorrectly installed or did not fit the requirements of the child. Six seats were part of a recall or were unsafe and eight people arrived without car seats for their children. 26 seats were given out and the parents instructed on the correct installation and use. In addition to the free car seat inspection, each child received a free book (funded by the Clarinda Youth Corporation), photo ID cards were available courtesy of State Farm Insurance and children received either a bike helmet or bike flag free when they visited at least 10 of the 27 booths. The drug dog from Fremont County was there to meet the kids and demonstrate his skills. Page County EMS provided a free pediatric CPR class following the Fair. Exhibitors at the fair gave away numerous items to children and adults, all stressing health and safety. Each exhibitor was also asked to bring an activity for the kids to do with their parents, thus encouraging parent-child interaction that is so important for healthy families.

# Building Families Empowerment Area

## Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties

Contact: Ann Stewart, Coordinator  
2300 Superior Street  
Webster City, Iowa 50595

Phone: 515-832-9639  
Fax 515-832-9560  
www.buildingfamilies.net



### Building Families Empowerment Board

#### **Vision Statement**

Building Families' vision is for families and individuals to live in a safe and nurturing environment that promotes health, independence and success. By the year 2005, Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties will create a continuum of supports and services that embraces children and their families.

#### **Mission Statement**

Building Families will be a catalyst by which our community works together to promote healthy children and families in Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties.

#### **Overview of Community Plan**

Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright Counties define Building Families Empowerment Area. In the summer of 1999, Building Families developed a plan that addresses the needs of children aged 0-5. The plan establishes a continuum of services that enhances healthy children, provides children the necessary components to be ready to succeed in school, develops secure and nurturing families and secure and nurturing child care environments.

#### **Local Indicators**

- The percent of all children 0-5 with adequate health care coverage.
- The percent of low birth weight infants.
- The percent of pregnant women accessing health care during their first tri-mester.
- The percent of founded child abuse assessments.
- The percent of children beginning kindergarten with at least one year of preschool experience.
- The percent of children entering kindergarten meeting or exceeding phonemic language skills.
- The percent of children aged 0-5 with an IEP/IFSP who met their yearly goals.
- The percent of registered childcare providers who comply with the minimum DHS training and standards for registration.
- The number of childcare slots.
- The number of children placed in foster care.

#### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

Families Forward: Provided by the three Public Health Agencies in our counties, the program links with Early Head Start and HOPES to provide the following:

- Assessing each family with a newborn for risk factors.
- Educating parents on child development, parenting, and providing parent support.
- Health screening, health education, and assuring each child has a medical home.

Home Consultants: Child Care Resource and Referral provide one Home Consultant for each county. The Home Consultant program provides:

- Basic training for the requirements for a child care home to be registered, technical assistance to child care providers, centers, and preschools and environmental assessments to ensure quality.
- Keeps data on providers and open slots in each county.
- Is a referral service for parents needing childcare.
- Distributes mini-grants and incentives to providers to encourage training.

In-Home Substance Abuse: Community and Family Resources provide staff who works with families with substance abuse issues. The In-home Substance Abuse Counselor does the following:

- Provides pre and post treatment support to family members.
- Educates family members including children of all ages.
- Provides crisis intervention and develops safety plans for families.

In-Home Mental Health: In-home therapy provided by Children and Families of Iowa and Youth Shelter Services:

- Reaches families before they enter the child welfare system.
- Addresses restorative living skill development, family skill development, communication and social skill development.
- Therapy services designed to halt, control or reverse undue stress and severe social, emotional or behavioral problems that threaten or have negatively affected the child's and child's family's stability.

Preschool Scholarships and Transportation Program provides:

- Preschool scholarships to three and four year olds attending preschool.
- Transportation to and from preschool from their child care development homes or from family homes where there is no transportation available.

Every Child Reads: Provides strategies for preschool and child care teachers to use in language development, reading and writing.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

"How do we define school readiness?" Building Families sponsored a kindergarten survey of all children entering kindergarten in the fiscal school year of 2003. Ten school districts and two parochial schools surveyed 438 children.

The survey was split into four dimensions of learning:

- A. Health and physical development
- B. Emotional well-being and social competence
- C. Communicative skills
- D. Cognition and general knowledge

The survey indicated that 75% or more of the children had their needs met in the areas of health and physical development. Although results indicated that phonemic awareness scored higher than expected by the teachers, reading and vocabulary were identified as the primary training for childcare professionals.

Teacher recommendations for parents to encourage school readiness included: reading books to their children beginning at birth, giving children responsibilities, keeping a routine and schedule, having family time, turning off the TV and video games, and eating one meal a day together.

The information gathered from the K-survey and meetings with the teachers is being used as a tool for identification of Early Childhood training and for data collection to show progress towards children ready to learn by the age of five.

## Hardin County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area:

Hardin County

### Contact for Area

Vicki Ocasio, 3405 S. Center St., PO Box 497 Marshalltown, IA 50158  
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### Vision and Mission

All citizens of Hardin County are healthy physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Hardin County Empowerment Area (HCEA) initiative is a partnership between key stakeholders representing education, health services, childcare, volunteer organizations, businesses and human service agencies and citizens. It is committed to improving the well being of families and children through the provision of a seamless service delivery and support system which ensures healthy lifestyles. Key elements of the plan are as follows:

- ◆ Support the continuation of the “Welcome Baby Program.” The program provides two home visits to all families with newborns within the county. During the visits hearing and vision screenings, nutrition and health information, support, education and resource referral will be provided.
- ◆ Increase the availability of the Parents as Teachers Program so families in all the school districts of the Empowerment Area who want to participate will be able to receive the service.
- ◆ Increase opportunities for health check ups, immunizations and lead screenings by way of home visits, and extending clinic hours so all preschool children will receive these services according to the recommended timelines.
- ◆ Increase access to preschools by providing scholarships for tuition if needed.
- ◆ Sustain and support preschools.
- ◆ Provide effective training to childcare and preschool providers that promote developmentally appropriate practices.
- ◆ Increase affordable, quality childcare to help parents obtain and maintain employment.

### Local Indicators

Newborns with Low Birth Weight	Infant Mortality Rate
Children Immunized	Teen Pregnancies
Children Exposed to Lead Hazards	Preschool Enrollment
Child Abuse & Neglect Rate	Nurturing Families
Collaboration Among Service Agencies	Library Usage
Kindergarten Literacy Skills	Children with Preschool Experience
Preschool Slots Available	WIC Children who are Obese/Underweight

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS	PURPOSE
◆ CCR&R	To improve access to and quality of child care by recruiting new family child care providers, providing technical assistance and support to existing child care providers and programs, coordinating professional development opportunities and incentives program for Hardin Co. child care providers and programs that participate in professional development activities; providing access to toy, equipment, and resource lending library.
◆ IA Falls Early Childhood Program	To promote preschool literacy and pre-reading skills (phonemic awareness, rhyming skills, etc.) and increase parent involvement in literacy development.

SCHOOL READY PROGRAMS	PURPOSE
◆ Greenbelt Home Care/Welcome Baby	To provide in-home visitation to new parents and babies to provide education and support; to address issues of substance abuse, infant neglect, domestic violence; to provide health screening, referrals, immunizations.
◆ Every Child Reads	To expand the capacity of early care and education system providers, families, and selected community members to promote language, reading, and writing; and to enhance the literacy development of children.
◆ PAT	To provide new parents with the support and information they need to foster the child's language, cognitive, social and motor skill development; to monitor the child's educational, hearing, visual and motor development.
◆ MICA Dental	To screen, educate, and apply fluoride varnish to the teeth of children; to assure access to both primary and preventive oral health care.
○ MICA Right From the Start	Provides LaMaze education, comprehensive nutrition services, breast feeding support and supplies, and early literacy books and education.
○ Hardin Co. Library Baby Books	Provides every newborn in the county with his/her first book and educates parents on the importance of reading to children at an early age.
○ Preschool Scholarships	To provide scholarships to children who would not otherwise be able to attend preschool; to promote early childhood development and kindergarten readiness.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Hardin County Empowerment Area Board continues to make strides toward improving a comprehensive service delivery system for all citizens in Hardin County. The Board has maintained a diversified membership and established a number of working committees: Membership/Nominations Committee, Budget/Finance Committee, Public Relations Committee, and a Grant Review Committee. The HCEA Board has been fortunate that many of the early child care providers routinely attend Empowerment board meetings, helping to insure cooperation and collaboration.

The preschools often serve as the site for health care screenings (dental care, immunizations, etc.) Hospitals and clinics have worked with provider agencies to assure that health care services are delivered to children and their families. Care seat safety checks, dental screenings, lead testing, immunizations, and vision and hearing screenings have been provided through Greenbelt Home Care, MICA and AEA 267. Greenbelt Home Care has worked with CCR to provide health resources to child care providers and programs. Furthermore, agreements with Greenbelt Home Care, Ellsworth Hospital, and a private trainer have made scholarships available for CPR/First Aid training for child care providers.

Literacy resources have been distributed and shared among the various child care providers and providers have assisted in engaging parents in literacy development activities. CCR partnered with the Every Child Reads committee to offer a DIBELS training program and to purchase and distribute children's books. School district personnel have been particularly helpful in assessing and evaluating the school readiness skills of preschoolers entering Kindergarten. Child care providers frequently use the services of AEA 267, Hardin County nurse, ISU Extension, Center for Childcare Resource and Referral, Iowa Falls Early Childhood Committee, and the public library.

Client referrals among agencies are common practice. Providers participated in the annual Latino Family Fiesta Health Fair, the Ellsworth Municipal Hospital 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Health Fair, and the first annual Success Street Young Children's Community Fair. CCR coordinated the first Child Care Today! Networking meeting for child care providers in Hardin County and partnered with Every Child Reads to sponsor DIBELS training for preschool teachers. They also worked with Early ACCESS, MICA Head Start, Greenbelt Home Care, Parents as Teachers, and the Iowa Falls School District to coordinate the 'Learning is Fun!' provider/child activity held in the spring.

Diane Foss  
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Onawa, Iowa  
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## HARRISON – MONONA – SHELBY EMPOWERMENT BOARD



### **MISSION**

To ensure the collaboration within our community that will provide our families with young children the resources and opportunities necessary to have the highest quality of life possible.

### **VISION**

Our community will assist families in nurturing their children in a safe and supporting environment, which will provide the opportunity in preparing our children for a safe and healthy future.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

In 2002 the Harrison, Monona, Shelby Community Empowerment Area (H/M/S CEA) held focus groups to re-evaluate the needs of our communities. The needs assessment has let the H/M/S CEA realize how important the early childhood education, parent support and education, and child care issues are to the families of our communities. At this time we are addressing these issues with programs funded through Empowerment and working with local community agencies to bring other services to the families. The Community Plan is being revised to fit the community needs that have been identified.

The H/M/S CEA will be identifying other areas of concern in our community plan. Our focus is being expanded to include early childhood literacy, dental health issues, pre and postnatal needs, and child care provider training. At this time community and board members are working together to update our community plan. This plan will continue to promote the development of families with children 0 - 5 by providing and looking to address the needs of our communities.

### **Local Indicators**

- ❖ Number of families participating in Home Visitation Programs
- ❖ Number of children who had a preschool experience entering kindergarten
- ❖ Number of Child Care slots available

### **Services from Empowerment/Successes/Results**

- ❖ **LEARNING FOR LIFE - Parent Education Program**  
Learning for Life is a program that follows the Parents as Teachers curriculum and incorporates other parenting education opportunities. Implementation of the home visitation program for families with children prenatal to age five will help assist in preventing child abuse/neglect, increase school readiness, and reduce the need for traditional Child Welfare services. Parent educators continue to collaborate with other services agencies and programs. All three programs in the counties work closely with the preschools, Head Start, and childcare centers. Each involves the educators with home visits, parenting meetings, and daily activities. Future plans are to start an infant home visitation by a local hospital's birthing nurse. The nurse doing the home visits will be the one that helped the mother during birth of the child. Keeping the connection with the family from the hospital, the nurse can work with the family concerning physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs of the parents and infants. In continuing with the family the nurse will help make community connections that are in the best interest of the family and child. Learning for Life Program will work closely with each of the visits and make the connection with the family as needed. This program has been a joint collaboration between H/M/S CEA, Department of Public Health, five different community school districts, Head Start, two local hospitals, ISU Extension, Child Care Provider Lending Library, Area Education Agency, Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, FaDDS, Department of Human Services, and child care providers. The number of families served has grown since the

development of this program. In 2003, 220 children from 157 different families were served. This has increased from the first year in 2001 where 73 children from 62 different families were served.

❖ **PRESCHOOL**

Local school-based full-day and half-day preschools programs have been able to continue with the help of Empowerment. Without the support of Empowerment these preschools would be closed. This would eliminate childcare slots. In some areas this is the only source of early childhood education for the children of our rural areas. The purpose of each of the preschools is to help each child develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Each preschool works closely with the home visitation program and has made a tremendous impact in the area. The locally empowerment funded preschools in 2003 served 60 children.

One community school district has continued their at-risk summer preschool program. This program serves children identified through kindergarten roundup. Kindergarten teachers and AEA staff have identified the children as needing additional support before entering kindergarten. This program serves up to 20 preschool children each summer. The growth of each child is monitored very closely. This gives a the student a chance to become familiar with the teacher and work on skills needed before entering kindergarten.

❖ **PRESCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**

Preschool scholarships are being offered to help fill slots with children where Head Start is not available or the family is just above Head Start guidelines and does not qualify. Each program serves children that otherwise would not be able to have some early childhood education. In 2002, ten children were served with preschool scholarships. In 2003, the program has been expanded to all three counties with 21 children being served through the preschool scholarship program.

❖ **LEARNING FOR LIFE RESOURCE ROOM AND CHILD CARE PROVIDER LENDING LIBRARY**

The Learning for Life Resource Room and Child Care Provider Lending Library has been started in one county in our area. The Learning for Life Resource Room allows families with children 0-5 to come in a use a relaxing room filled with resources that they may not have access to in their own home. This also gives parent educators a place to meet families when they are looking for other places outside the family home. A local school has graciously given the space for this room. The school is also assisting the community by allowing a child care provider lending library be set up for local childcare providers. Resources and materials have been purchased through childcare mini-grants for childcare providers to use in their business with their children in their care. The development of this room has brought childcare providers together to plan and spend their mini-grants together as a whole. This allows for more children to use the items purchased, instead of one provider and a limited number of children. The Child Care Provider Lending Library opened in August of 2002. In the first seven full months of use, childcare providers checked out items for use in their business over 700 times. Since August, many more materials have been added and providers have been using the room daily.

❖ **PAL BOOK BAGS**

H/M/S CEA started a literacy program that collaborated with public libraries and local Head Start programs. Project PAL (Play and Learn) is a series of six book bags designed to promote family literacy and increase parent-child interaction among families with children aged 3 - 5 years old. Each bag contains an age-appropriate book with developmentally appropriate activities on positive nutrition and health, family mealtime, self-esteem, family relationships, and money management that correspond with the book's story line. The families read together and do the enclosed learning activities together which strengthen skills needed by young children before entering public school and provide quality learning experience for parents and children to do together. The start of 2002 26% to 65% of the parents using the bags practiced the literacy skills with their children. In 2003 76% to 100% of the parents using the bags practiced the literacy skills with their children. Parents have checked out the six book kits 362 times since the start of the program in January of 2002.



## HEALTHY HENRY COUNTY COMMUNITIES

### Henry County, Iowa

#### Contact

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#### Mission

Working together to make Henry County a better place in which to live, work, and raise a family.

#### Vision Statement

Henry County Empowerment Vision is to foster healthy, nurturing, safe communities where children, families and caregivers are strengthened and empowered through support services leading to their success.

#### Overview of Community Plan

Henry County planning events have identified the need to develop parenting skills and a support network for parents and caregivers as a priority issue. The use of primary and secondary data indicates a great need to support young teen mothers. Three priority issues have been identified:

1. Increase the availability of quality, affordable, reliable childcare
2. Develop parenting skills and support network for parents and caregivers
3. Create partnerships with community, government, agencies, schools, and businesses

These issues are addressed through The Nest, Mentoring Moms, Fathers Matter and Project REACH programming.

#### Local Indicators

- % parents accessing parenting/community resources
- # male caregivers involved in programming
- # of support network for participants
- # of teen parents involved in programming o Teen birth rates
- Percentage low birth rates
- Number of families/children with access to an adult mentor
- Child abuse rates
- Immunization rates by age 2 among enrolled participants
- # of childcare providers,
- # of registered childcare providers,
- #licensed childcare centers
- # of providers accessing Early Childhood Specialist,
- # of new childcare providers entering profession
- Increase # of providers accession PITC training
- Graduation completion/GED rate among enrolled participants

#### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

1. **Mentoring Moms** is a community based mentoring program for pregnant and young mothers. Trained volunteer mentors spend time each week providing information, support and friendship until the baby is at least one year old. Young mothers and their mentors plan their own activities based on each individual situation, but with a strong emphasis on education.
2. **The Nest** is a program designed to encourage young families to adopt healthy life-style behaviors and helps them improve the overall health and well being of the family unit. The Nest offers educational classes on a variety of topics, support groups, workshops, playgroups. The Nest maintains linkages with

key maternity and infant care personnel in local hospitals, clinics, and with human service agencies, schools, and churches. Families referred to the Nest "earn" points toward incentive items through a variety of health-promoting activities.

3. **Project REACH (Rural Early Childhood)** An Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) provides one-on-one education on-site to in-home and center based childcare providers. The objective of this project is to deliver education and support to childcare providers particularly in the rural areas where resources are sorely lacking or inaccessible altogether. The ECS provides hands-on experiences with children and information on developmentally appropriate practice for the childcare provider. By working directly with providers in a supportive, modeling format, the quality of childcare is improved, early learning environments and experiences are enriched, and school readiness is improved. T ANF has provided the funding for a series of monthly workshops for the providers on a variety of topics. Teaching kits and other resources on the topic are available at each workshop. PITC (Program for Infant Toddler Care) is offered over the course of twenty sessions to all childcare providers who choose to participate.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

#### **The Family Connection: The Nest of Henry County & Mentoring Mothers**

- 69 young parents are enrolled and accessing community resources! The Family Connection also serves as a meeting place for Promise Jobs, Book Club, and AEA preschool screenings. 13 families participated in playgroups, 13 in Book Club.
- Surveys from participants report at least an 85% improvement in self-sufficiency, stress reduction, and increased knowledge of growth and development, health and nutrition, guidance and discipline and utilization of community resources.
- Eleven active mentor-mentee relationships, mentor pairs spent an average of 10 hours per month together, 30% of the pairs spent 15 hours or more together each month.
- Child Abuse Prevention Funds continue to support parent education and playgroups.
- A Parent Council was formed to assist in decision making for the Family Connection. Five Parent Council members are now serving on the Advisory Board, increasing leadership capacity.

#### **Project REACH:**

- 85 individual center or home childcare providers have accessed the services of the Early Childhood Specialist. This initiative provides a collaborative opportunity with the public library, nursing homes, Childcare Resource and Referral, Head Start, the Community School District, hospital, mental health counselors, public health, Area Education Agency, local businesses, and mental health counselors.
- Program evaluation by participants revealed 100% improvement in the area of child observation and assessment. Program evaluation by participants also revealed above average growth in knowledge of community resources, professional development, provider/child interactions, curriculum planning, and child growth and development.
- 10 workshops for home and center childcare providers were presented by ten community experts; 20 Program for Infant Toddler Care workshops (total of 40 hours) attended by 29 childcare providers was presented by the ECS.
- \$6,500 in educational resources utilized in centers and home daycare for 400 children.
- The number of registered home has doubled in the past year .

#### **Collaboration:**

The Healthy Henry County Communities Coalition consists of broad county representation. Monthly meetings allow and encourage discussion on initiatives that are focused on improving the health and quality of life in our county .We have reached beyond the traditional early childhood realm to include substance abuse prevention activities and diversity appreciation issues. We have also gained significant support from several of our major industries. Annual strategic planning has allowed us to re-assess our priorities and strategies.

## **Healthy Families Ida County Empowerment**

### **Contact for Area**

Jan Burk, Community Resource Coordinator  
104 Taylor Street, Suite C  
Ida Grove, IA 51445

### **Vision**

To build, through community cooperation, a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that supports the growth of all children and families.

### **Overview of Community Plan and Local Indicators**

- Early Childhood Funds: We hope to provide a positive childcare environment for young children. Improving quality and quantity of childcare through the provision of childcare related services is one of our goals. This has been done through the offering of preschool scholarships and by making equipment grants available to area childcare providers. The Child Care Resource and Referral program provided through Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc. has been the agency providing oversight to their activities.
- School Ready Funds: A home visitation service had been expanded this year to 25 families. The board has subcontracted services through Ida County Public Health and trained two registered nurses to provide services to at-risk families at no charge. Community resource and referrals have been provided through our Empowerment Coordinator. We have also provided in-kind space to WIT and Job Service of Iowa. They staff the office on Thursdays and provide service to individuals who are looking for employment. The local board also targeted lead screening, decreasing the incidence of child abuse, maintaining immunization levels about 93% and assuring that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. We have enhanced community awareness and collaborative efforts through the car seat safety inspections and the community wide health and safety fair.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- Early Childhood Funds: Preschool scholarships were made available to 3 and 4 year olds with preschool age children who did not qualify for Head Start or when Head Start was not available. There were 19 accepted into the preschool scholarship program and a number of families went to Head Start. Scholarships were awarded on financial need or 180% of Federal Poverty Standards or below. Equipment grants were awarded to 3 centers and 9 in-home providers. Of these in-home providers, 6 were registered.
- School Ready Funds: Home visitation services were expanded with Ida County Public Health and patterned after the Healthy Families Model. We offered services to 25 families this fiscal year. Two families refused services. This is a voluntary program.
- Empowerment news articles on the dangers of lead poisoning increased community awareness. One special lead screening was done in April at the annual Health and Safety Fair. Normally, the families are tested at the WIC clinic. Any child can be tested in Ida County. This is not limited to WIC participants. 24% of Ida County

- children who are 6 years of age are lead poisoned according to the Iowa Dept. of Public Health. 56.7% of the housing in Ida County was built before 1950. We have had more than a twofold increase in testing since 1999 when Ida County Empowerment started this project.
- Immunization rates have been maintained at or above 90%. We currently are at 94%. Child abuse rates have increased to 25. This was up 10 cases. There was a change in 3 social workers within this year. A video in shaken baby syndrome has been used in-home to educate the families on this subject. The number of children attending preschool and in Head Start has increased to 109 families. This is a 63% increase.
- Five county libraries have participated in projects. 647 children were involved in the literacy project for children ages 0-5. They had a 16% increase in the number of items checked out. The local library checked out, on the average, 204 items per month countywide. Empowerment was successful in sponsoring any car seat inspections in 2002-2003 due to lack of inspectors in our area. We are hoping to have some trained by next fiscal year.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

- Ida County Empowerment had a lot of success this year due to collaborative efforts within the county and through the local Community Action Agency. Our annual Health and Safety Fair is one of many examples of collaboration. Our board decided to change the health fair as an after work, early evening event in April. We doubled our attendance from 100 to 200 participants. Lead testing by the WIC nurses was doubled as well. The following agencies collaborated with us: Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.'s Outreach, Child Care Resource and Referral, and Women, Infants and Children's Programs, Ida County Sheriff, Iowa State Highway Patrol, Horn Memorial Hospital, Jackson Recovery, Horn Aux-Silliary Clowns, Ida County Public Health, Iowa State University Extension, State Farm Insurance, Hawk-I, Ida County Anti-Tobacco, Early ACCESS-AEA, Pocket Preschool, Child Health Specialty Clinics, Ida Grove Presbyterian Church and Little Pirate Preschool. The event was held at the Ida Grove Community Center who in-kind the rent. We had Stub's Memorial Library read to the children in a book corner. A cutie pie contest, clown face painting, free lead screening, over 100 fingerprints of young children, age appropriate games, and a photo with the State Farm Bear were also carried out.

## Iowa County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Iowa County

### Contact for Area

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### Vision

The families and children in the Iowa County Empowerment Area will lead happy, healthy, and productive lives, utilizing services available in the fields of education, health, and human services.

### Mission

It is the mission of the Iowa County Empowerment Area to be consumer driven, integrated, and Community owned; through networking within the community, an environment where children 0 to 5 and their families lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Iowa County Empowerment Plan included hiring a full-time Parent Educator for and implementation of the Parent as Teachers Program, providing scholarships to parents to assist in affording the costs associated with preschool thus decreasing the possible disparity in access to preschool education created by economic barriers. To increase the quality of child care by providing scholarships to registered providers, to use to fund safety and health upgrades. And to increase the quantity of quality child care by providing scholarships to non-registered providers, to use for start-up costs associated with becoming registered.

### Local Indicators

#### Healthy Children

- Reduction in low-weight babies
- Increase the immunization rate of children
- Increase prenatal care
- Increase coverage of Hawk-I
- Increase proper knowledge of nutrition

#### Children ready to Succeed in School

- Kindergarten attendance rate of those who attended preschool
- Decrease in children identified for special education
- Increase number of Head Start slots
- Increase pre-school capacity through scholarships

#### Safe and Supportive Communities

- Decrease serious crime rate
- Decrease juvenile arrests
- Increase employment rate
- Decrease domestic abuse rate

#### Safe and Nurturing Families

- Decrease in child abuse rate
- Decrease in poverty rate
- Increase in percent of parents participating in parent education
- Increase in percent of parents attending school conferences

Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments

- Increase in number of registered/accredited child care providers
- Increase non-traditional after hour care
- Increase number of CACAP participates

**Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

School Ready Funding was received in January 2001. In fiscal year 2003, the following activities were funded.

1. **School Ready Funds:** Sustain and Expand the Parents as Teachers Program:
  - a. Referrals were made upon the birth of a child in the empowerment area
  - b. Parents were provided with information and support through home visits, and referrals with other resources available
  - c. In fiscal year 2003, services were provided to 93 families, with 296 participates. 2905 units of service were provided to these individuals. Every face to face interaction with a child, parent, or caregiver constitutes a unit of service. Fifty percent of the families received 10-12 visits, with three families receiving over 20 visits this year.
2. **Early Childhood Funds:** Early Childhood Funding came in July 2000. In Fiscal Year 2003, the following activities were funded.
  - a. Preschool and daycare scholarships were provided to 27 children. These were provided to families where their children were attending licensed preschools.
  - b. Registered home provider scholarships were provided to 11 applicants. The funds provided opportunities to enhance the health and safety of these homes, therefore increasing the overall quality of the child care services being provided. In addition 3 new provider grants were awarded to assist non-registered home providers to become registered.

**Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Preschool Scholarships were provided to 27 clients and home daycare provider grants were awarded to 14 private daycare providers. To increase the comfort and safety of their facilities and the educational offerings provided to children.

The Iowa County Empowerment Board worked with many entities in the community in an attempt to increase the outreach and enrollees in the HAWK-I program. Emphasis was placed on integrating the outreach with free and reduced information that schools distributed in their start of the year newsletters.

ICE and Young Parents Network have collaborated to increase the impact of the PAT program in Iowa County efficiency utilizing the resources of both organizations and multiply the results achieved.

## Jasper County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Jasper

### Contact for Area:

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### Vision and Mission

The Jasper County Empowerment Area shall be a community of thriving families composed of one or more members. The community shall embrace thriving families as the most positive way to improve the quality of life for all those living here and to ensure the well-being of the community.

Each sector of the community, non-profit, for profit and volunteer shall combine and maximize all types of resources to afford and deliver the targeted services necessary to allow families to thrive. An active, visionary Empowerment Area Board directs this collaborative effort.

A thriving family shall be identified according to the following criteria, depending on the number, ages, and relationships in each family. Thriving families have:

- *a sense of personal dignity and worth* for themselves and others.
- *shelter of choice*, which requires less than 1/3 of the family's income and where each family member feels safe and secure in the home and neighborhood.
- *good nutrition* with the ability to afford a variety of foods and to eat balanced scheduled meals. They also have the knowledge to use the foods and equipment to safely prepare meals.
- *quality healthcare* established with health professionals, covered by comprehensive insurance. They practice preventative medicine.
- *drug-free lifestyles* including avoidance of illegal substance and tobacco. Family members are knowledgeable of and follow low risk guidelines to avoid the development of alcoholism and other drug addiction. People recovering from alcoholism or other drug addiction follow appropriate treatment recommendations and recovery programs. Children are taught life-style risk reduction skills.
- *gainful employment* and they are developing transferable skills. Employed members have comprehensive employment packages and steady advancement in their chosen careers
- *adequate income* and a budget to allow family choices with at least 10% going to savings. They have established a relationship with a financial institution, regularly pay bills, and manage their debt load without depriving family members.
- *parenting skills* to enable children in the family to live with mutually agreed upon rules and age appropriate expectations. Children enjoy their parent(s); becoming happier and better adjusted socially.
- *quality child care* to enable working parents to enhance the development of their children and be more productive in the workplace.
- *strong family relations* with members of the immediate family living together. They consistently nurture and care for each other. Members have a strong supportive network of friends and extended family members.
- *life-long learning goals* are part of the adults' life plans. They graduate high school, set and pursue long-range career and personal goals, and have training beyond their secondary education.
- *children's education* is a priority. Children are enrolled in preschool education. Families support opportunities for learning and assist their children in developing good relationships with their peers.

The Jasper County Empowerment plan was based on information gained from reviewing data from existing surveys, assessing existing resources, and collaborating groups. Analysis of that information assisted the Jasper County Empowerment Area Board to determine the following priorities as related to the legislative intent of the Statewide Empowerment Initiative.

## **Overview of Community Plan**

The Jasper County Empowerment Board will develop a coordinated, central point of entry for families with children under the age of five. This will be accomplished through home visitation services to Jasper County residents who have a newborn child. This project will help to ensure that all children are healthy and all families are secure and nurturing.

The Jasper County empowerment Board will insure that parents with a child between the ages of birth and five have access to the Parents as Teachers Program or other parent education opportunities. This will help to insure that all children are equipped with the skill necessary to succeed in school and that all families are safe and secure.

The Board will work to increase the quality and availability of childcare options for Jasper County families. This will insure that the children of working parents have access to secure and nurturing opportunities.

## **Local Indicators**

1. Increased number of families that accept a home visit
2. Increased number of families who participate in the PAT program
3. Increased number of schools who distribute school readiness bags
4. Increase positive family interactions
5. Decreased child abuse and neglect
6. Increased health status of children 0-5
7. Increased number of children with access to health insurance
8. Decrease number of children who enter school with developmental delays
9. Increased basic skill level of children
10. Increased parents knowledge of normal child development
11. Increased family awareness of existing community resources
12. Increased quality of available child care.
13. Increased communication and collaboration between service providers

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The Home Visiting program at Skiff Home Care provides an in home nurse to visit new born children in Jasper County. Personalized calendars are offered to each family containing appropriate developmental, nutrition, health, and safety information for the child at each stage of development. In addition Denver Developmental Screening is available and encouraged for children at 6 months, 1,2,3,4, and 5 years.

The Jasper County Child Abuse Prevention Council sponsors the Parents As Teachers program as an in-home effort to educate parents about child development and appropriate parental expectations. Through this program crisis care needs are sometimes identified, and support made possible. Developmental screening is also made available in families not receiving visits from Skiff Home Care.

A full-time Jasper County Child Care Coordinator and Educator directs a child care program contracted between Child Care Resource and Referral and Iowa State Extension. The position is housed in the Extension office and supervised by the Extension director under contract with the Empowerment board and the Extension Council. An Advisory Council meets with the Coordinator as outlined in the Empowerment bylaws. The Coordinator provides educational opportunities, works to develop additional child care based on community need, and assists child care providers to become certified. The Coordinator also supervises a part-time employed home consultant.

Jasper County Extension provides "Learning Bags" to children in Jasper County at Kindergarten Round-up. The bag contains educational materials to enhance school readiness skills; e.g., scissors, coins, crayons, etc.

## **"Showcase" of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Child Care Resource and Referral had the task in Fiscal Year 2003 of introducing Child Care Providers to the new State Laws regarding child care. One of the new registration guidelines is that all child care providers have at least one 2A 10BC rated fire extinguisher. In an attempt to help providers: know what is required of them, obtain an appropriate fire extinguisher, and know how to use an extinguisher in an emergency; CCR&R worked together with the Newton Noon Kiwanis for funding, the Newton Fire Department for hands on and classroom training, and with the Newton DMACC Campus/Sodexo Conference Center for a location in order to make a training available. The Kiwanis club supplied CCR&R with funding to coordinate the event and purchase Fire Extinguishers for 20 Child Care Providers in Jasper County. The extinguishers were given to Child Care Providers who attended and successfully completed the training, and additional training will be offered in FY 04 for providers who could not attend.

# JEFFERSON / KEOKUK EMPOWERMENT AREA

covering Jefferson and Keokuk Counties!



## Contact

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## Vision

"Through community partnering and collaborative efforts, all families and children within the Jefferson / Keokuk Empowerment Area will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment."

## Philosophy (Mission)

We believe our partnership is guided by drawing on the strengths and experiences of all persons within the Jefferson / Keokuk Empowerment Area. In this we believe that:

- ✓ Families that are connected to schools, support systems & resource services are more stable; which encourages better emotional, physical, social & environmental growth of young children, specifically birth thru age five.
- ✓ Parents are the primary teachers for the development of children from birth through age three. There is a need for parent information and education about child development to enhance school readiness.
- ✓ Child care providers become a primary partner in many of our children's development. Therefore, quality and available child care becomes extremely important. Good child care will impact the school-readiness of our children and, on a longer view, our future citizen ;make-up.
- ✓ Early experiences have decisive impact on brain development & the nature & extent of later adult capabilities.
- ✓ All children should have preschool access, which allows them to enter school prepared to maximize potential.
- ✓ All individuals and families should be urged to communicate their needs and have them considered within the collaborative system.

## Overview of Community Plan (from original Community Plan of August, 1999 )

The Jefferson / Keokuk Empowerment Area is located in Southeast Iowa. With scarce resources, the area has a strong history of interagency collaboration to maximize better services for our families and children. Community Investors met for more than a year to identify key issues facing the community and have determined how those issues might best be addressed to produce safe, supportive communities and to enhance the quality of life for Southeast Iowa families. Four major community needs impacting the 0-5 populations in these two counties were identified following community meetings. First, it is felt that families that are connected to resource services, schools and support systems promotes better development for their young children. Second, parents and childcare providers during those 0-3 years are immensely important in the future success and ability of that child. Third, all children should have access to pre-school experiences or developmental child care. Fourth, healthy infants and young children will be better able to grow and develop to their capacity exhibiting enhanced learning capacity in later life. These needs parallel the purpose as described by Empowerment Legislation and have created the impetus for construction of present programs.

## Local Indicators

### Early Childhood Environments

- ↑ basic skill level & ↑ quality & accessibility of childcare.
- % of children identified for special education before age 4.
- # of licensed/registered/non-regulated providers participating in training.
- Measurement of skill level/readiness for kindergarten.
- % of kindergartners who attended pre-school, head start, developmental family day care program
- # of licensed/registered childcare slots inc. non-traditional hour & infant slots.

### Health

- ↑ health status and ↓ incidence of abuse or neglect through:
  1. Blood lead levels, ↑ % of children Screened for lead;
  2. Rate of immunizations by age two (2).
  3. DHS confirmed ch abuse rates
  4. Rate of out-of-wedlock births
  5. Teen birth rates.
- ↑ health status & assure children . have a medical home.
- ↓ family violence recidivism.
- % newborns assessed for risks
- Ins.awareness: hawk-I, TXIX
- ↑ % of women w/early prenatal
- screen newborns for hearing.

### Parent Education and Support

- ↑ parental involvement w/their young children; encourage early intellectual stimulation; ↑ access of children/families to an adult mentor.
- ↑ parents @ parent/teacher conferences
- Childcare provider/pre-school contacts w/Parents.
- Parental bonding with children.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding / Showcase of Successes**

**Every Child Reads:** This program involves three parts: community involvement, public policy and the education of "child care providers" in early reading readiness for our children. Involves 15 hours of education sessions to childcare providers. These funds would purchase small chalk boards the providers would use for their children to practice writing movements and encourage them to write. The boards will be distributed to the participants of the classes covering language development, reading and writing skills for use by their childcare children as they model and teach skills in their childcare settings.

**Parents As Teachers:** provides home visitation services, at no charge, for all parents of children birth through 2, and in some cases for parents of children ages 3 and 4, as parents may need or want to improve their parenting skills. Offers in-home visits by a certified Parent Educator. Parents will learn about each stage of development and how to encourage the best growth. They have Periodic Development Assessments as well as Group Parent meetings. Independent evaluations of PAT have shown enhanced language, problem solving and social development by age 3 and higher scores on reading and math tests in early elementary grades. PAT children may be referred for Newborn Home Visits that are available through our local Public Health agencies. PAT children will also have opportunities for Dental Screenings to assess the child's dental health and provide applications of a cavity fighting liquid to the surface of the child's teeth.

**Keota School Pre-School:** Prekindergarten and Developmental Kindergarten Programs for 4 and 5 year olds which have programs designed to equip children with the necessary readiness skills, including social skills, needed in order to start kindergarten. The goal is to service 100% of the 4 and 5 year-old children in the school district. Have bi-monthly informational meetings for preschool parents and any parent of a child needing information. Provide preschool services to 100% of the 4 and 5 year olds in the school district and to open enrolled students. Offer Developmental Kindergarten Program for kindergarten readiness for all preschool aged children and Pre-Kindergarten for children who need extra preparation w/option of moving on to the Developmental Kindergarten. Include a strong home/school connection. Keep parents informed of weekly events, offer classes and opportunities to interact w/their child during craft sessions.

**"hawk-i" Health Insurance Program:** provides health insurance for kids who are eligible. Hawk-i Outreach Coordination is used as a tool to distribute necessary information to doctor offices, dental offices, hospitals, insurance companies, school nurses, secretaries, office personnel, loan offices, city halls, law enforcement facilities, many grocery stores, public health nurses, factories, gas stations and others to increase the number of eligible children utilizing the hawk-i program and also enhances the medicaid numbers of eligible children. Presentations are done anywhere as requested to promote this program.

**Childcare Educator:** provide advanced child development training. The Educator will help by planning training, setup presenters and other such tasks associated with training needs of the providers. The Childcare Educator will work with CCR&R on training needs as requested. The Educator will provide extra support to childcare centers, by going into a center and provide special resources for classroom activities and support for administrative and teaching staff. Outcomes to be seen include assessment and surveys showing growth in environment and provider skills, providers will have an increase in training which includes Child Net and/or obtaining Child Development Associate Credentials, show an increase use of literacy activities and providers using literacy programs with the children in their care. Increase the childcare provider's knowledge and/or skills through their attending training sessions throughout the year. An increase should be seen in the number of childcare providers offering non-traditional childcare.

**Childcare Provider Grants:** provide mini-grants for equipment to childcare providers offering infant care, third shift care serving children with special needs. Provides grants for small items (fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors) to promote health and safety. (support grant to be limited to \$500.00 per year per provider)

**Family Reduced Childcare Fee Program:** Provides funds for families to have reduced childcare fees of up to 25% if their income falls between 141 - 185% of poverty. The payment is made directly to the childcare provider.

**Professional Development Grants:** Child Net training offers 10 educational classes to learn new ideas and techniques that will enhance the atmosphere of their childcare business, which is hoped to lead to quality improvements. These 10 classes include 'A More Professional You', 'Creating Learning Spaces', 'The Growing Child', 'Activities for Early Learning', 'Keeping Pace', 'It's Your Business', 'Reducing the Health Risk in Child Care', 'What's Cooking?', 'We All Belong' and 'Invest in Yourself'. Child Net Training shows a commitment to quality childcare.

**Professional Ethics Training:** "Professional Ethics in the Child Care Setting". Offered will be stress management, putting aside anything but caring for the children, cultural issues, working for families and infant development, home-based business issues, balancing work and family and working with parents.

**Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale:** (ECERS) Increase quality childcare. Provide training resources and financial support to improve or enhance quality within five day care centers. Educate center directors about the ECERS tool. The training will be tailored to the individual needs of each center based upon the results of the ECERS evaluation. The financial support will be offered to help strengthen any identified weak areas as determined by the ECERS scale.

**Mini-Grants:** Mini-grants using remaining Empowerment Funds and keeping within the guidelines of those funds, will be used to award additional programs from \$1.00 to \$1,500.00. Individuals with a proposed program or project, may complete a mini-grant application for the Empowerment Board to consider.

## JOHNSON COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA

### JOHNSON COUNTY

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### Vision

The Johnson County Empowerment Area strives for safe and healthy children and families at home and in the community. The Empowerment Area is a place where all people share responsibility for creating safe and healthy conditions in which to learn, work, and live.

### Mission

The goal of the Empowerment programs is to ensure that young children are properly nurtured and stimulated in safe, healthy, and stimulating environments so that they are ready to learn and succeed when they enter kindergarten. The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board will lead the community in responding to human needs through public/private collaborative partnerships.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Johnson County Empowerment Area Plan addresses early childhood environments for children prenatal to age five years. The Plan includes three primary components: early education, health, and parent education/family support. Community Work Groups have been designated for each area of the Plan to develop and support implementation strategies. An Early Childhood Specialist provides consultation and training to families, early education providers, participating staff at family resource centers, Community Work Groups, and the general public. Priorities in each of the three primary components include:

**Early Education:** improving availability, accessibility, and quality of early childhood environments outside of the home.

**Parent Education/Family Support:** encouraging safe, stable, nurturing home environments by providing neighborhood based services and building natural networks of support within neighborhoods.

**Health:** increasing access to quality health care for children, early identification of health concerns, increasing accessibility of health insurance for children, and providing consultation to child care providers.

Johnson County has a long history of successful cross-system collaboration. For several years, our efforts have been directed towards the dual goals of achieving measurable results for children and families and the creation of a service delivery system that is integrated, preventive, accessible, and efficient. These collaborations provide a crucial foundation for the success of the Johnson County Empowerment Area. The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board is working to formalize the existing relationships among the health, education, and human service communities and to coordinate the identified agreed-upon community priorities into a comprehensive community plan.

### Local Indicators

The **primary indicators** being measured for the Johnson County Empowerment Area are:

1. rate of low birth weight births
2. Immunization rate at age 2 years
3. Teen birth rate
4. Number of founded child abuse reports
5. Kindergarten readiness
6. Incidence of abuse in child care settings
7. Number of child care slots; including percent for children birth to two years and percent that are licensed/registered/NAEYC accredited

### Summary of Selected Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

#### EARLY EDUCATION

**Best Beginnings:** Community Coordinated Child Care (4Cs) program to recruit and increase quality of home providers of infant child care. Includes a class, equipment, training vouchers, resource materials, support and home visits.

**Continue Care:** Temporary child care funding to assist families to maintain stability for a child in their current child care arrangement even though a family situation has changed.

**Handicare & NCJC Wraparound Child Care:** Child care funding to expand existing State Assisted Child Care and/or Promise Jobs part-day/part-year child care slots into full-time/full-year slots.

**Home Child Care Mentor Program:** 4Cs program to recruit, retain, and increase quality of home based child care. Child Care Consultant provides technical support, resource information, equipment, materials, and training stipends.

**ICCS D Twain Preschool Before-And-After School:** Before-and-after school care for the Twain Preschool program so students may attend 7:30 am-5:30 pm in their classroom, providing consistency in early childhood environments.

**PREP (Preschoolers Reaching Educational Potential):** Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County summer school readiness program. Preschool program, parent consultation, and home visits create an early link between home and school.

**Little Engine Preschool:** Preschool scholarships for 3 and 4 year old children living in rural areas without access to Head Start.

**Shared Visions Programs:** Funding to 7 Shared Visions programs to compensate for the shortfall caused by state budget cuts.

#### **PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT**

**Family Support Program:** Home visiting program which assists families in learning about child growth and development and provides assistance locating quality child care, accessing health care, and providing a child-safe environment. Home visits focus on observing child behavior and development and applying parenting knowledge on a daily basis. Offered through 3 community based agencies at 8 local sites.

**Informal Networking Mini-Grants:** Offered through 4 community based agencies, provide opportunities for families to participate in Family Fun Nights, Parent Support Groups, Neighborhood Advisory Councils, Health Fairs, Play Groups, and educational programs. Provide funds to build resource and toy lending libraries for families prenatal to 3 years.

**Parent Education Classes** Six-week parenting sessions offered at the Iowa Children's Museum, Little Engine Preschool in Lone Tree, and Lakeview Preschool in Solon. The workshop objectives are to enhance parent support and education, build support networks, reduce isolation, and promote positive parent-child interactions.

#### **HEALTH**

**Pediatric Nurse Practitioner:** Collaboration with United Action for Youth and Mercy Hospital Iowa City to employ a pediatric nurse practitioner to provide health screening, pre- and post-natal care, well-child services, nutrition counseling and referrals to teen parents and their children.

**Children's Health Insurance Outreach:** Collaboration with Visiting Nurse Association to employ a half-time outreach coordinator to market and recruit for the hawk-i program and to assist families in securing healthcare coverage for their children.

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

**Community Resource Council (CRC):** The Community Resource Council is a partnership with representation from many human service agencies in Johnson County. Participants in the CRC include service providers currently serving the Empowerment Area as well as providers who may work cooperatively with Empowerment but not receive direct funding.

**Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC):** Through Johnson County Public Health, the Johnson County Empowerment Area Board received funds generated through the Medicaid Administrative Claiming process. These funds were made available as community-based mini-grants to address local children's health issues including child care provider training, car seat distribution and education programs, crisis diapers, purchase of mental health testing items.

**Johnson County Community Council:** Collaboration between Empowerment, Johnson County Public Health, Mercy Iowa City, United Way, University of Iowa College of Public Health, and Johnson County Council of Governments to coordinate community planning. This collaboration may result in an Empowerment Board that has a more broad community focus and will address all areas of community and individual service needs. Began as an independent council but evolved in to an ad hoc committee of the Johnson County Empowerment Area Board.

**Decat:** The Johnson County Empowerment Area Board has enjoyed a strong partnership with the Johnson County Decat Project from the outset of the Empowerment initiative. Over the years, Decat has provided in-kind staff support, funding for evaluation, and funding support for Empowerment services. Funding cuts in the Department of Human services made the continuation of any Decat funding – for staff or services – untenable, so the Decat and Empowerment boards have worked closely together to make the necessary transition. For example, administrative responsibility for Home Ties, a locally funded emergency child care program, was transferred from Decat to Empowerment this year.

## **Jones County Empowerment Area**

### **Counties in Area**

Jones County

### **Contact for Area**

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### **Vision and Mission**

Jones County Empowerment Area's vision is to provide services to families and individuals through community resource providers blending their resources and expertise to enable and empower families with children 0 – 5 and to access services and make choices that will strengthen our children and our community.

Jones County Empowerment Area's mission is to develop the capacity and commitment for achieving the results of :

Healthy Children

Children Ready to Succeed in School

Safe and Supportive Communities

Secure and Nurturing Families

Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments

### **Overview of Community Plan**

Our community plan is a collaborative effort of citizens and stakeholders whose commitment is to establish a caring community that supports families and children. As responsible caring citizens and agencies, it is our work to develop a system that helps promote the positive development of families and children. This system operates from the paradigm that local citizens with other stakeholders have the power and knowledge to create a community specific plan based on outcomes that is proactive and inclusive to all areas of the community. This plan promotes the development of families and children by engaging all members of the community, establishing a shared vision, a common language, and a collaborative planning structure.

Community specific outcome based programs provided by Empowerment are: Community Health Child Care Consultant, Jones County Family Resource Association, Community Health New Born (Hopes) Program, HACAP School Readiness Program, Jones County Family Resource Association Provider/Parent Child Development Training, Alternative Services In-home Crisis Counseling, Iowa State Extension Reading Program, Young Parents Network In-home and visitation (Parents As Teachers Program), and Olin Preschool Scholarship Program.

### **Local Indicators**

Local Indicators from data gathered by Iowa State University and Community Health of Jones County Health Survey indicate a need for support and/or opportunities for change for families in the following areas: stress reduction, affordable health insurance, supervised activities for youth, personal financial management, and employment.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

1. Jones County Community Health provides Child Care Health Consultant, a trained nurse, visits with all registered and non-registered county providers on a monthly basis. Monthly learning curriculum lessons focus on different topics such as fire safety, brain development, discipline skills, care safety, and school readiness skills. This hands on approach teaches children to be safe in their community.
2. Jones County Community Health also provides for a New Born Assessment, an in-home visitation program for families. Trained staff assess the needs of the child in conjunction with risk factors within the family for early intervention. This program is based on the Hopes visitation model.
3. The Jones County Family Resource Association provides childcare certification classes, child development education, information to strengthen family support, and necessary community referrals. A parent library is also maintained for community use.
4. HACAP provides transportation reimbursement to attend Head Start Programming for low-income families.
5. Alternative Services provides 24-hour response program for families, schools, and communities.
6. Young Parents Network provides Parents As Teachers programming in the homes of eligible parents and their young children. They also provide group meetings for support and networking among the families served.
7. Olin Day Care is the contact for a Preschool Scholarship Program. They provide scholarships for income eligible children to attend preschools in Jones County.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Jones County Empowerment Area continues to improve collaboration and cooperation within the Jones County Communities.

This year we added funding for a preschool scholarship program to provide preschool experience for income eligible preschool children in Jones County.

We also added giving support to the Young Parents Network to increase their involvement with families in Jones County. There was a written collaboration agreement between Jones County Family Resource Association and Young Parents Network to facilitate services offered to Jones County families.

Alternative Services continued to be able to meet the crisis situations of families with children through referrals from schools and various community agencies in Jones County.

Jones County Community Health provides training for one staff to specialize in day care home visitations. This person has been able to visit day care homes and collaborate with the Department of Human Services to increase certification of day care homes. Health and safety needs in these settings have improved.

The Family Resource Association collaborated with Jones County Community Health and the Iowa State Patrol for car seat safety checks within the community.

All community service agencies and schools have a representative attending the Empowerment meetings held monthly in Jones County.



### **Counties in Area**

Kossuth and Palo Alto

### **Contact for Area:**

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### **Vision**

Partners in the Palo Alto/Kossuth (PAK) Empowerment Area believe that developmental opportunities for children ages birth to five play a critical role in establishing lifelong patterns. Children in this population group are ready to learn and develop the perceptual framework that will guide their lives. Along with the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety, qualities such as a feeling of family support, positive identity, social competency, and a nurturing environment are essential for lifelong healthy development.

### **Mission**

- Provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for all children age birth to five.
- Provide training support to parents and other caregivers of the birth to five population.
- Prepare children age birth to five with the skills needed to be ready to take advantage of educational opportunities and learn to the best of their ability.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

The plan which the PAK Empowerment Board has envisioned will provide a seamless, comprehensive delivery system of family services to address the gaps that are currently present. The plan includes home visits to parents and childcare providers, education opportunities for parents and childcare providers, and lead screening for children to identify and reduce elevated blood lead levels. The vision of this Board has been and continues to be that children need positive opportunities to learn and grow, and by reaching out to those who care for them, we can accomplish healthy, happy, well-developed children who are ready to succeed in school.

## **Local Indicators**

- Improved prenatal care for pregnant women leading to healthier children.
- Expanded in-home visitation services leading to parents who are better able to:
  - Provide a secure and nurturing environment for their children.
  - Select childcare environments for their children that are equally nurturing and secure.
- Improved education for parents and childcare providers leading to:
  - Caregivers who are more knowledgeable about early brain development.
  - Children who are better prepared to succeed in school.
- Increased number of childcare providers who have received child development education leading to a corresponding increase in the number of children cared for in nurturing childcare environments.

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- HOPES-like home visitation programs in both counties.
- Expanded KIDS program
- Lead screening clinics, education, and tests.
- Parent/Child classes
- Childcare provider support groups
- Childcare provider visitation program
- Educational opportunities for communities, professionals, parents, and childcare providers.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

- Collaboration – Monthly Healthy Families meetings are held between Community Health Departments, KIDS staff, ISU Extension staff, CARE Team, and AEA staff.
- Cooperation – Local childcare providers have started meeting monthly to share information, ideas, and experiences.
- Cooperation – Childcare providers have hosted AEA staff at their childcare facilities for story time and enrichment activities for the children, educational materials for the providers to include the Harms rating scale and follow-up to improve quality of care provided.
- Results – The KIDS Program continues to serve children over the age of three, with no risk-based criteria for participation allowing the program to continue to reach more families and children.
- Accomplishments – Parent educational classes called “Growing Together” have drawn many parents and children to a program which partners with local preschool teachers and uses local school classrooms. The program has been commended as a means to help children more easily into the preschool environment, as well as connecting adults with parenting resources.
- Success – Enrichment activities for children and parents such as “Playdough Fun Days”, and “Art in the Park” have been praised by the local media in newspaper articles.

## **“Children First”**

### **Counties in Area**

Lee County, Van Buren County

### **Contact for Area**

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### **Vision and Mission**

**Vision:** Our long term vision is for all families with young children to have access to quality childcare, early intellectual stimulation, are free of child abuse and neglect and have the skills and services needed to be healthy and strong.

**Mission:** All families living within Lee and Van Buren Empowerment Area will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable, and nurturing environment, which will enhance their abilities to reach their full potential and be self sufficient.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

The “Children First” board and subcommittees, with community input, began the process of revision of the original community plan in 2002. The “Children First” empowerment area continues its long-term process in completing the empowerment area’s Strategic Community Plan. The initiative includes developing a comprehensive detailed plan that allows for on-going coordination and allocation of various resources and efforts that benefit youth and families in Lee and Van Buren Counties. During the past 2 years, numerous planning sessions and focus groups have been held with the assistance of the Criminal Juvenile Justice Planning Department and Jonathon Cloud, a hired strategic planning consultant from Miami, Florida. Several representatives from business and industry, service organizations, education, health, and consumers have committed their time to help identify *protective* factors that exist in the CEA or are needed to expand upon to support healthy childhood outcomes and youth development. The key protective factors that have been identified are: Family and Community Support; Parent Involvement in Schooling; Bonding to School and Youth Role Models. The focus groups/planning sessions also identified the *risk factors* that could disrupt successful childhood outcomes and healthy family functioning in the CEA. These included concerns in three primary areas: Child Abuse and Neglect; Poor Academic Achievement and a Sense of Alienation. In the spring of 2002, community partners divided into three large focus groups in areas of *Prevention, Intervention, and Corrections*. Each group worked diligently to determine and agree on the key services and resources that are already functioning successfully and addressing the priority needs of the CEA.

The empowerment funded projects for FY03 were all identified as priority programs as they all place an emphasis on *Prevention* services at the earliest age possible where a significant impact can be made on the future of children. In the winter months of 2002-2003, the CE Board began to realize the need to take a step back and review what we are doing, where we are going and what the community as a whole knows about Empowerment. It was decided to focus specifically on prevention for families with children age 0 to 5 for several reasons. The Board felt the mission, vision and activities were not well defined enough for ourselves or for the community. The Board agreed upon and began the task of redefining mission, vision, indicators and activities with the assistance of technical assistance from the state. It was decided this was absolutely necessary before expansion into other age areas and before a campaign was initiated to bring about more community awareness. This development and planning activity took the form of many strategies. The Board held a retreat day and focused time at regular meetings on the state Empowerment Toolkit. A subcommittee was formed to review and update by-laws which are now ready for Board approval. A subcommittee was formed to develop indicators for adoption by the Board. This group continues to work together. A communications subcommittee was developed to plan a community awareness campaign. The Board agreed to focus on currently funded prevention projects to enhance their quality and provide a solid foundation for future growth. A goal of the Board is to complete work by January 2004 on a new community plan with a solid foundation as we look to the future.

### **Local Indicators**

The local CEA indicators have been adopted by the CEA board and apply to the total 0-5 population in the empowerment area. The chosen indicators are identified in Section IV in this annual report (see section IV).

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The empowerment area chose the following School Ready and Early Childhood services to fund this fiscal year:

#### School Ready funded projects and activities:

- Two **Parents as Teachers (PAT)** home visitation programs: PAT provides research-based parent education curriculum to families and children in both Lee and Van Buren Counties. Services are open to all parents in the counties and focus on child development; home safety; effective discipline; constructive play and activities; social and motor development; and language and intellectual development.
- Expansion of the **Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success /Healthy Families Iowa (HOPES/HFI)** home visitation program: HOPES/HFI (a Healthy Families America accredited program) provides voluntary, intense, and long term research-based parent education and support services to families identified as most in need of services

in Lee County. Services focus on promoting optimal child health and development; improving family coping and functioning skills; promoting positive parenting skills and intra-familial interactions; and prevention of child abuse/neglect and infant mortality and morbidity.

- **hawk-i Outreach Coordinator:** Provides hawk-i health care coverage education and outreach for children 0-19 in both Lee and Van Buren Counties.
- **Childcare Health Consultant:** Provides education and support to Childcare Centers, Registered/Non-Registered home providers and pre-schools to enhance the quality, health and safety of childcare in both Lee and Van Buren Counties. The Childcare Health Consultant attends ongoing training as needed and as available to enhance knowledge and skills.
- **Stork's Nest program:** The Van Buren County Stork's NEST program supplements the PAT program as it provides incentives for pregnant women to have healthy babies and encourages mothers to obtain adequate health care utilizing the health care system. Weekly classes are offered at the NEST location covering various educational and pre-natal topics.

#### **Early Childhood /TANF Funds:**

- **Two Babysitting 101 Courses:** Courses were offered to young residents in both Lee and Van Buren Counties to provide instruction, guidance and various resources on babysitting. The courses emphasized safety, nutrition, proper supervision, and age appropriate activities for children in their care.
- **Before & After School Workshops:** Workshops were held for childcare staff who work with before and after school-aged children. Ages and Stages, activities, field trip ideas and communication topics were presented to enhance the before and after school programs in the CEA.
- **Reading is Fundamental:** Four workshops were presented to childcare providers to promote language and literacy skills. The workshops included childcare providers learning how to encourage parents to read to their children; choose appropriate books for children; develop language and literacy in young children; and rhythm and rhyme reading activities. Participants who completed all 4 workshops received \$400 in books for their childcare.
- **Child Care Provider Appreciation:** Provided activities and support for area childcare providers in recognition of Childcare Appreciation Week in May 2003.
- **Resource/Information Centers:** Resource/Information wall holders were placed in childcare centers, pre-schools and homecare childcare facilities for parents to access a multitude of handouts designed to strengthen child development and support.
- **Minnesota Early Learning Design (MELD) Importance of Play Workshop/Resources:** A community workshop offered to area providers to learn strategies for engaging parents of children ages 0-5 to learn elements of play and its' impact on brain development, physical growth and the parent-child relationship.
- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Program:** Provided education through a local community college to childcare providers to obtain their CDA degree.
- **Annual Child Care Enhancement Conference:** The Annual Child Care Enhancement Conference is a one day conference provided to local child care providers. This annual conference is designed to enhance the quality of child care by increasing the knowledge and skills of child care providers. The conference consists of expert speakers and breakout sessions with various topics related to caring for children.
- **IAEYC Conference:** Allowed registered and licensed childcare providers as a group in both counties to attend the fall IAYEC conference in Des Moines for staff development and training. The funding provided the IAYEC conference experience plus a networking opportunity between local providers en route on a charter bus and at the conference.

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Our area continues with its successful cooperative and collaborative efforts as many organizations and citizens are working together to make a positive impact on the lives of children 0-5 and their families (see section II for detailed list of community partners, resources available to families with children 0-5, and how we are all working together). With successful outcomes from the empowerment funded programs, continued efforts of other interested groups, providers and citizens, the lives of families and children have been positively enhanced. Hundreds of families have benefited from home visitation services, parent group support, outreach services, improved quality of childcare, and increased involvement in community projects and activities. Many children have benefited from increased health care coverage, increased preventive health care, parents feeling supported, improved environments of childcare, increased positive parent-child activities, and improved home safety. The communities at large have benefited from healthier and stronger families, citizens working together, and an increased amount of resources available for families in need.

The "Children First" Board has made a strong commitment to board development. The members have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to work with funded projects to improve quality and determine indicators that are universal to Lee and Van Buren counties; to gain a greater understanding of empowerment and board responsibility; to revise by-laws; to begin the revision of the community plan; and to increase community awareness of "who and what" Children First is. With the absence of a Coordinator board members have stepped up to the plate to assume responsibility and growth has occurred in Board members and in the relationship between Board members. Currently, the Board is in the process of hiring a new Coordinator. A great deal of time has been spent reviewing expectations of the Coordinator and the Board and in assuring a smooth transition process for a new Coordinator.

**Name of Community Empowerment Area:**

Linn County Community Empowerment

**Counties in Area**

Linn

**Contact for Area**

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Linn County Community Empowerment & Decat Coordinator

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**Vision and Mission**

The Linn County Empowerment Board has a vision to better organize community systems, work collaboratively across systems, involve local citizens and improve outcomes for children and families.

**Overview of Community Plan**

The Linn County Community Empowerment Area adopted an updated community plan on May 28, 2002. The new plan identified the following priority areas for Fiscal Years 2003-2005:

- Affordable, High Quality Child Care & Child Development
- Children Safe from Abuse & Neglect
- Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children
- Family Members Free from Domestic Violence
- Families Have Stable Housing
- Identify & Serve Children with Special Needs at An Early Age
- Prenatal Care Beginning in the First Three Months of Pregnancy

**Local Indicators**

The following indicators were selected as indicators of the well-being of the Linn County Community:

- # of registered child care home providers
- # of licensed and registered child care slots
- # of comprehensive child development program slots (full-day-full-year)
- # of subsidized child care slots
- Confirmed child abuse rate
- % of children with recurrence of substantiated neglect/abuse within 6 months
- State Kindergarten Readiness Perception survey- Linn County data
- # of civil domestic abuse cases filed
- # of children, age 0-5, reported as part of homeless family in a shelter
- # of children receiving Early ACCESS services vs. # of children should be served
- % of mothers with prenatal care in 1<sup>st</sup> trimester
- % of mothers with prenatal care in 1<sup>st</sup> trimester, by Race/Ethnicity

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- 1) Health Care, Screening and *hawk-i* Enrollment: Family and Community Health Alliance
- 2) Parent Support and Education: Parent Education Consortium
- 3) Family Support Workers and Family Counseling: Family Violence Collaborative
- 4) Child Care Provider Recruitment and Training: Provider And Child Education Services
- 5) Full-day Full-year Child Development Programs: Wraparound Programs at Two Step-Up Preschools & Five Head Start programs
- 6) Transportation to Step-Up Preschool Programs: Cedar Rapids Community School District

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

- Funded 56 additional Head Start and Shared Vision wraparound slots resulting in a 140% increase in the number of slots in full-day full-year high-quality child development programs. In the Linn County Community Empowerment area we have created opportunities for 96 children to receive a high quality child care and education experience and assisted their families in obtaining or maintaining employment, job training or education.
- Improved our process for increasing the coordination of resources and identification of emerging needs by holding Strategy Forums with funded programs. Our funded programs, called Strategies, meet with Committee members to discuss a specific topic area and then the Strategies identify ways they could share resources. Committee members use this opportunity to keep current on Strategy activities and to monitor emerging needs and possible overlap of services.
- Developed a new Evaluation process, with assistance from outside consultants, to improve our ability to analyze the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of funded programs. This thorough review of the activities of each Strategy increased our understanding of their services, caused significant changes to their data collection efforts and resulted in a tool the Board can use to assist with funding decisions.
- Enhanced our collaboration efforts by supporting a Community Fatherhood Forum series, facilitated by Neil Tift, of the National Practitioner's Network for Fathers and Families. As a result of the forums a Linn County Fatherhood Task Force was formed with sub-committees to address the specific barriers noted by forum participants. Linn County Community Empowerment members participate on those sub-committees.
- Linn County was one of 8 counties selected for the National Association of Counties' (NACo) 2003 *Counties Care for Kids* award. The award is given in recognition of the county's support of Linn County Community Empowerment and the Linn County Child Development Center. The President of NACo stated that "Linn County's Child Development Center and Community Empowerment Program deserves to be especially recognized for its tremendous work and innovative ideas in caring for our nation's children and families". A member of the Empowerment Board attended a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. on April 8, 2003 during National Government Week, to receive the award.

## Madison County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Madison County

### Contact for Area

Valerie J. Owens  
Madison County Empowerment Board  
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Winterset, Iowa 50273  
(515) 462-2024

### Vision and Mission

The Madison County Empowerment Board, through collaboration with citizens, businesses, elected officials, volunteers, Health professionals, Human Services professionals, and Educators visualizes a community that is truly committed and takes responsibility for the well-being of all families and all children. The overall goal of the Madison County Empowerment Board is to develop a comprehensive, seamless, delivery system that will enhance all parent's abilities to provide their children with the skills need to succeed in school.

The basic goal is based on the following assumptions:

- All children need to have nurturing, caring parents.
- Parents who have access to information, education and support can respond more positively and effectively to their children.

Both emotional and physical needs of parents must be met if they are to respond positively to their children.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Madison County Empowerment Area had developed the following plan:

- Provide home visitation services to all Madison County residents who have a newborn child regardless of where that delivery takes place. This project will help to ensure that all children are healthy and that all families are secure and nurturing.
- Ensure that all Madison County parents with a child between the ages of birth and five have access to the Parents as Teachers Program or other parent education opportunities. This will help to ensure that all children are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in school and that all families are secure and nurturing.
- Build child care capacity by recruiting and training of new providers.
- Provide support that assists families of young children in setting goals, looking at the families greatest needs and prioritizing those needs, accessing programs to meet goals and needs in order to ensure a safe and stable family environment.
- Provide research-based curricula and training for pre-school staff.
- Increase the quality and affordability of child care in Madison County. Increase the number of children attending preschool in Madison County. In addition, the Board will assist working families with transportation to and from preschool. This project will ensure that children of working parents have access to secure and nurturing child care environments and have an opportunity to attend preschool.
- Provide home visiting program focusing on parent education regarding food and financial management issues.

### Local Indicators

1. Increased number of families that accept a home visit.
2. Increased number of families who participate in the Parents as Teachers program.
3. Increase positive family interactions.
4. Decreased child abuse and neglect.
5. Increased health status of Madison County children age 0-5.
6. Increased number of Madison County children with access to health insurance.
7. Decreased number of children who enter the school system with developmental delays.

8. Increase basic skill level of all children.
9. Increase parent's knowledge of normal child development.
10. Increased availability of affordable child care and preschool options.
11. Increased preschool attendance.
12. Increased Child Care providers attending training.

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

Home visitation program in Madison County provided by Earlham Home Care provides an in-home nurse to visit newborn children. Educational materials are provided that contain developmental nutritional, health, and safety information for the parent for each stage of child development. In addition, the babies are screened to make sure that they do not have any special needs, developmental delays, referral to appropriate services, and education to parents about management of pediatric medical conditions.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a program that is a home based early childhood/parent education program that focuses on teaching parents about normal child development, age appropriate expectations of children, and effective forms of behavior management. Each family participating in the PAT program typically receives a home visit from a trained parent educator on a monthly basis. The parent educator brings parent handouts pertaining to the child's age and stage of development, an interactive activity for the parent and child to engage in, and a book to read to the child. The parent educator may also bring additional resource materials if requested by the parent.

Madison County Public Transportation provides transportation of children to preschool and day care. This alleviates the need for working parents to take time from work to transport the child during the day.

CRISP (Community Resources in Service to People), is an information, referral and support service located in the Winterset elementary school. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the children served were ages 0-5. An intake assessment is completed at the initial meeting with a client. It is during this meeting that the CRISP caseworker becomes the contact which insures that the client's needs and goals are met and the result is the family's needs are provided for in a friendly and efficient manner. CRISP goal includes outcomes of greater family stability, children who are ready to learn, and empowered communities of responsible, productive citizens.

Child Care Resource and Referral provides training for child care providers and consultation services for home-based child care providers. Services include training workshops, assistance to individuals seeking to become a register day care provider, and information and referral for parents seeking child care.

Crisis Care was utilized for a very short period in the FY03. It is hoped that we may resurrect this service utilizing some Empowerment dollars in the next fiscal year.

Al's Pals is a prevention program utilized within several day care centers in Madison County. The program addresses violence prevention, substance use prevention, conflict resolution, social skills training, character education, life skills building and parent education.

The Family Storyteller Curriculum was implemented during this Fiscal year and has had great success. It was promoted through the Shared Visions program at the I-35 school preschool known as ADAPT. It was also provided at the Winterset Library collaborating with Parents As Teachers educators.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

In reviewing our year we see that our providers have continued to grow in their collaboration with each other and are continuing to work toward a better understanding of what can be done for Madison County's 0-5 population. Collaboration was the name of the game during the year. The projects we have picked to be our key ones have continued to grow and be successful. P.A.T., for instance, indicates that 100% of their families report they are reading to their children on a regular basis. Other providers report increases in meeting their goals as well.

Working on the infrastructure of the Board has been a major part of the last 6 months of FY2003. Continued work is planned for FY2004.

## Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Mahaska-Wapello Counties

### Contact for Area

Beth Mohrfeld  
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Fort Madison, IA 52627  
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### Vision

All families in the Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area have an opportunity to live in a safe, stable, healthy and nurturing environment.

### Mission

Our mission is to enhance community recognition in that the parent is the child's first and best teacher and therefore establish an ongoing program to assist parents in stimulating the development of their children.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Community Plan for the Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area was developed based on a number of local and state needs assessment tools and community input. Data and feedback collected helped to identify gaps in services relevant to School Readiness and Early Childhood needs. The Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area then elected to develop programming which combined prevention, support, and education into a comprehensive continuum of services available to both pre-parents and parents regardless of family income. As a result, the national *Parents as Teachers Program* was chosen to address the state expected result of Children Ready to Succeed in School.

Early Childhood funds are utilized in the two-county area to strengthen and expand the current childcare system to support the needs of families with children 0-5 years of age based on two surveys completed in 1998. The *Industrial Alliance Survey* and the *Child Health Specialty Clinics & Healthy Childcare Iowa Survey* initially identified where the specific needs for services were in the two-county area concerning childcare. Based on these results, Childcare Resource & Referral provides extensive outreach services to identify new providers and offers a variety of additional services to existing home and center childcare providers. Grant funds for equipment, training's and focused promotion and support towards quality and affordable childcare are just a few of the focuses of this funding.

Discussions on possibly reviewing/updating the Community Plan have recently occurred. Tentative date to begin work on the document is fall of 2003.

### Local Indicators

Early Childhood Environment *Increase the quality and availability of daycare in the two-county area.*

The number of licensed/registered/non-registered providers participating in training will be maintained or increase by 10% in Fiscal Year 2003 from the 2002 levels.

30 infant childcare slot subsidies will be provided to expand infant care during the 2003 Fiscal Year

15 childcare providers will receive on-site technical assistance to improve the quality of the provider's daycare program in Fiscal Year 2003.

School Readiness Environments *Increase basic skill level of youth*

Children who participate in Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program will score 10% higher in language, problem solving, and social development than children not having been enrolled in PAT. This will be assessed by test date measurements as they enroll and are screened by other programs, such as AEA, Head Start and local Educational Agencies by 2004.

Health *Increase the health status of children in Mahaska and Wapello counties and decrease the incidence of child abuse rates.*

Number of children immunized at age 2 in Fiscal Year 2003 will increase 5% from 1999 levels as a result of the education and reinforcement provided by the PAT program and the NEST program.

The number of founded child neglect and abuse cases in Fiscal Year 2003 will decline by 5% from 1999 statistics as a result of parent involvement in the PAT in-home program and school based component.

The percentage of births to teens in Fiscal Year 2003 will decrease 5% from 1999 levels due to the knowledge gained by participating in the school-based components of the PAT program.

Parent Education & Support *Increased parental involvement with their children and encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children and increase the access of children and their families to an adult mentor.*

100% of parents of births at local hospitals during Fiscal Year 2003 program will be furnished with information regarding accessing parenting/community resources before leaving the hospital.

110 families will enroll in the PAT program and 95 families will complete the first program year of PAT by June 30, 2003

To assure that families enrolled in the PAT Program access other appropriate community services, 300 referrals on behalf of the families will be made in the fourth full year of implementation

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* program promotes early childhood parent education and provides family support utilizing the nationally acclaimed PAT curriculum. Programming is designed to empower parents to give their children the best possible start in life through educating parents about child development and parenting practices while monitoring the child's development. Services are done through home visits and group meetings. Extensive training empowers parent educators with the knowledge and resources needed in order to provide child development and parenting information to parents and children 0-5, as well as monitor the child's development. Parent Educators are able to comprehensively assess the family's health, education, and social service needs. PAT is a preventive program anticipating problems before they occur and offers education to prevent at-risk behaviors. PAT is a community-based program that enables numerous professionals to bring their expertise to the family. Referrals come from all segments of the community. Families in the program are also referred to other appropriate services available when necessary.

The Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Board works intricately with the area *Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R)* to provide extensive outreach to identify possible childcare providers and offer additional services to existing home and center childcare providers in the area. The overall goal for the Childcare Project is to strengthen and expand the current childcare system to support the needs of families with children 0-5 while enhancing the quality of care for children. Support services offered to childcare providers in Mahaska/Wapello Counties include: promoting registering and licensing of homes or centers; provider training and continued education; training's to become certified in CPR and First Aide; and the availability of grant funds in order to purchase equipment for childcare homes or centers.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Success in programming funded by the Mahaska/Wapello Empowerment Area can be seen by what data collected reflects. Overall, childcare enhancement has significantly increased by the number of individuals providing childcare in the two-county area, the number of childcare providers participating in trainings, and the support to new providers in getting established to ensure quality care from the beginning. Having both a Childcare Consultant and Childcare Health Consultant available has enabled childcare providers and families to have access to much needed resources and information in a timely manner to continue the commitment to early childhood education. Since Mahaska & Wapello Counties were designated an Empowerment Area, participation in childcare enhancement efforts have doubled in all indicators tracked. This not only shows a commitment by those providing the service, but also by the community for expecting the best out of those who care for our children.

Data also shows us that the Parents as Teachers program continues to make great strides in assisting children in becoming school ready. Though many different definitions and interpretation define school readiness, one thing is clear- *parents are our first and best teachers*. Assisting them in being the best teachers possible can only be done by building on their strengths and providing them with knowledge. This program has accomplished that by involving parents and equipping them with what they need to help ensure their children are healthy, cared for and reaching their potential. Tracking these indicators has been accomplished through a community partnership commitment to the well being of children. Developmental screenings ensure that those identified early as having possible delays receive immediate referral and services to address needs. Children and families are assured health coverage in order to establish a medical home to promotes wellness. Families are learning how to appropriately interact with their children to encourage strong family ties by making all resources in the area available to them to access at any point they need to do so. As a result, more families are being served by PAT and additional children are ready to start school with what they need in order to be successful for a lifetime of learning.

# Marion County Community Empowerment Area

## Counties in Area

Marion County

## Contact for Area

Kim Dorn  
104 South 6th Street Box 152  
Knoxville, IA 50138

## Vision and Mission

The vision of the Marion County Empowerment Board is to enable the collaborative efforts of citizens and professionals of Marion County to develop and utilize all resources available to strengthen families and address the needs of parents and children.

The vision statement of the Marion County Empowerment Board is based on the following philosophy:

- We believe that all persons in Marion County deserve equal access to our shared community resources.
- We believe strengths exist in our own communities to define and address community problems, enhance present resources and to explore and cultivate new resources.
- We believe that resources are used most productively when needs are thoroughly and accurately assessed on an ongoing basis.
- We believe preventive measures and early intervention strategies are the most effective assistance to children and families.
- We believe that by working together as communities we can improve efficiency and reduce duplication of services -
- We believe that citizens should be encouraged to participate in all these efforts including the distribution and management of financial resources.

## Overview of Community Plan

1. The Marion County Empowerment Area will use asset building as the foundation for achieving school readiness.
2. The community members in the Marion County Empowerment area will take responsibility for the positive development of children during their first years of life.
3. The Marion County Empowerment area will focus on providing appropriate services to all families.
4. Members in the Marion County Empowerment area will become more knowledgeable of the specific programs that are available throughout the county.
5. The Marion County Empowerment Board will continuously research new initiatives to provide the most appropriate services.
6. The Marion County Empowerment Board will continuously evaluate all programs and services to assure that all goals, objectives and outcomes are met.

## Local Indicators

1. Early identification and intervention for potential developmental delays via Denver Developmental Screening Test
2. Increased number of families participating in home visiting program (888)
3. Increased number of children with access to health insurance.
4. Decrease number of children who enter school with developmental delays.
5. Increased basic skill level of children.
6. Increased parent's knowledge of normal child development.
7. Increased family awareness of existing community resources.
8. Increased quality of available child care.
9. Increased communication and collaboration between service providers.
10. Increased awareness of the **40** Developmental Assets.
11. Increased number of providers who are registered day care providers

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

The 40 Developmental Assets for preschoolers and toddlers is a tool that many individuals can use when working with families and children. The more assets that a child has growing up, the less likely they are to express negative behavior when they are older. Marion County Child Abuse Prevention provides trainings and resources on the 40 Developmental Assets for all Empowerment programs, preschools and daycares.

Crisis Emergency Child Care is provided through Marion County Child Abuse Prevention. Crisis Care provides emergency child care to families facing crisis situations. An individual is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for families in Marion County.

Parents as Teachers for Marion County is a voluntary, universal access, parent education and support, home visiting program for Marion County families with children prenatal to kindergarten entry. PAT uses a neuroscience, research based curriculum and Parent Educators provide monthly, individualized visits with parents and child care providers. Parent Educators also conduct parent or parent/child meetings and programs. Children are screened for developmental delays at appropriate ages and referrals and linkages to community resources are provided as needed. Enrolled parents and child care providers receive appropriate information on child development and how to enhance development and school readiness.

Baby's Bright Beginnings is a home visiting program. Each family with a newborn is contacted and offered a personalized baby calendar, which serves as both a keepsake and a health diary. The parent(s) receive information about infant and child development, feeding issues, safety, literacy development, and a myriad of other information the parent may have concerns

about. BBB sees each child at newborn, 6 months, 1, 2, and 3 years of age. At each of the visits (after newborn), the nurse does a Denver Screen. Newborns, and at ages 1 and 2, a new personalized calendar is made for the child, with an emphasis on issues unique to that age. At age 3, the family receives a "graduation" booklet. That visit includes assuring the family sends the child to preschool, and assuring they understand the availability of tuition assistance if needed.

**Preschool Tuition Grants** are available from the Marion County Empowerment Board. The board uses DHS fiscal guidelines for tuition eligibility, with the latitude to take into consideration special circumstances. The goal is to assure that all children, regardless of their ability to pay for preschool, are allowed the preschool experience.

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Marion County CCR&R has focused FY03 on expanding the training opportunities for child care providers in Marion County. Due to the increase in the number of training hours that is required by the state, we have offered a wider variety of training that has increased the quality of child care in Marion County. In FY 02 CCR&R offered 15 education classes with a total of 32 hours of training. In FY03 42 education classes were offered with a total of 94 hours of education. CCR&R has continued to offer ChildNet with a total of 15 home providers who completed the series. All trainings are now posted on line through the CCR&R website, where providers can view and register for classes in Marion County. Marion County has also continued to expand our video and toy lending library to make trainings and alternative activities more accessible to all providers of Marion County.

Marion County CCR&R has continued to make data collection and upkeep of the database a priority. Updates are maintained from providers on a monthly/bi-monthly basis. Updates are acquired through frequent mailings and phone calls to providers. Marion County CCR&R also sustains constant contact with the providers through county newsletters and visits from the home consultant.

The Home Consultant completed 52 home visits to new providers in Marion County. The Home Consultant is now responsible for distributing the application for Child Development Home Registration in Marion County. When providers call to request the application they are given the opportunity to enroll in CCR&R services. Providers who take the opportunity are given several resources that help them to provide high quality care. Safety supplies, Red Leaf Press Calendar Keepers, and the Iowa Family Child Care Handbooks are presented to each child care home visited by the home consultant. The professional relationships that are formed through out the home visits are an important aspect of assisting providers in maintaining high quality child care.

Although Marion County CCR&R does not handle parent referrals through the Marion County office, helping parents with child care is a main concern. Staff of CCR&R have presented to several organizations on how to choose high quality child care. Staff has also met with parent on a one on one basis through phone calls and The Home Consultant completed 52 home visits to new providers in Marion County. The Home Consultant is now responsible for distributing the application for Child Development Home Registration in Marion County. When providers call to request the application they are given the opportunity to enroll in CCR&R services. Providers who take the opportunity are given several resources that help them to provide high quality care. Safety supplies, Red Leaf Press Calendar office visits to help them to make a decision on child care. Information on parent referrals is also given to new parents of those children who are born in Marion County.

The 40 Developmental Assets has been a very successful initiative for some established and worthwhile programs that are going on now in Marion County. The preschools and schools in Marion County are currently implementing the 40 Assets and Character Education in their own ways. The Pella Corporation has implemented the six pillars of Character Education and Development into their daily routines in the offices and in the plants. Pella is also offering college credit and masters certificate trainings to many schools associated with Pella Plants across the state of Iowa.

Crisis Emergency Child Care serves many children throughout the year that are facing very difficult situations. With the increase of methamphetamine in our communities, law enforcement has been working very hard to incarcerate those abusing the drug. When children are involved, a call is made to the 24 hour number and the children are safely placed into a safe home until the parents have taken care of their situation. There have been several instances where children may be separated from their siblings and we have been able to keep them together. There have been several instances where a parent may call and just need advice for a troubled teen or use the crisis care program to relieve themselves and other family members from stressful situations.

Parents as Teachers for Marion County has been serving families in all Marion County communities (Knoxville, Pella, Bussey, Otley, Melcher, Pleasantville and Harvey). Parent Educators are residents of Marion county and participate in community life as residents, as well as, professionals. The PAT program has successfully partnered with multiple providers and organizations, including **Baby's Bright Beginnings** -home visiting nurse provides information to families about PAT; families can enroll in both programs; **Pella Regional Hospital**- packets for new families contain information about PAT and enrollment forms; PAT educator instructs a teen Lamaze class at hospital; **Main Street Books**, Pella -PAT partners with Main Street Books to promote family literacy. PAT families receive coupons that can be redeemed for a book. PAT purchases books at a discount to be used in the program; **Bethany Christian Services** -PAT partners with Bethany to provide PAT services to adoptive parents; **NEST Program** -families receive points for participating in PAT that can be redeemed in the NEST store; serve on the advisory board; **Heartland AEA** -PAT educators frequently accompany AEA staff to visit families; refer to each other; **Building Stronger Families** -asset information provided to PAT families; program information shared; **CCR&R**- Parent Educators instruct classes for providers; Central College-Pella -Parent Educators act as guest lecturers for early childhood education classes, supervise intern in early childhood education.

## Marshall County Community Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Marshall County

### Contact for Area

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Empowerment Coordinator  
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Marshalltown, IA 50158

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### Vision and Mission

To improve results for families with young children by empowering local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human service programs on behalf of the children, families, and other citizens residing in Marshall County.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Marshall County Comprehensive Community Plan and its revision is the community plan, which is being utilized for the planning and implementation of programs for Juvenile Justice, Empowerment and Decategorization initiatives in Marshall County. The 2000 revision has been expanded to include services for children 0-5 and their families. The Marshall County Comprehensive Community Plan, May, 2001 contains the following recommendations:

- Provide comprehensive assessment services to all children with serious behavior problems and ensure all recommended services are made available to children and families.
- Expand early childhood development programs like Early Head Start and Head Start so that all children needing services receive them.
- Expand the Building Healthy Families program so that all high-risk families who want ongoing support can have it.
- Implement local child care resource and referral services.
- Provide child care subsidies for families between 140%-185% of poverty.
- Provide support, incentives to child care providers to attain accreditation.
- Expand current resource center/lending library for area child care providers.
- Expand number of registered licensed child care providers.
- Provide financial assistance to providers attending training.
- Inform area child care providers about training opportunities.
- Provide incentives for child care providers who register with the state, become ChildNet certified and/or enrolled in CACFP.
- Educate parents and the community about issues related to quality child care.
- Coordinate efforts to deal with lead paint poisoning.
- Expand pre- and post-natal and infant in-home health services.
- Provide pre-school and child care scholarships to low-income children.

### Local Indicators

Rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect  
# of out of home placements  
# of domestic violence cases reported  
# and % of teen births  
# and % low birth weight births  
# and % of women giving birth who accessed prenatal care during the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester  
# and % of families participating in network/care management  
# and % of families participating in home visitation program  
# of licensed child care slots  
# of preschool slots  
# & % of children entering kindergarten with a quality preschool experience  
% of population using libraries  
% of children entering kindergarten demonstrating literacy skills  
# of low income families in registered and licensed care  
# of providers recruited  
# of additional providers registered, licensed and Child Net certified  
# of providers enrolled in CACFP  
# of providers attending training's  
# of parents who receive CCRR services  
# of children accessing transportation services

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

- Building Healthy Families, collaborative home visitation program that is designed to provide culturally competent support services, education and linkages to health care to all parents of newborns.
- Child Care Resource and Referral Services, offers a variety of training and professional development opportunities for child care providers, referrals and scholarships to low-income families who require child care services.
- Preschool/Wrap-Around Child Care Center, provides full day, part year child development and care services as an extension to Head Start program services.
- Early ACCESS Transportation Services, a transportation program that allows families who do not have access to a transportation system to have their children attend appropriate child care settings, Early Head Start, Head Start or preschool.
- Marshall County Child Care Services, provides quality affordable child care service.
- West Marshall Community School Transportation Service provides transportation for the Title 1 at-risk school program and an early childhood special education program.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Marshall County Empowerment Board actively engages area child care providers and school officials in its activities. The Board maintains a relationship with the Marshall County Youth and Violence Committee and Marshall/Hardin County Decat Board primarily through the Decat/Empowerment Coordinator and several members in common. The initiatives of the Empowerment Area were included in the revised Marshall County Comprehensive Community Plan, developed and maintained by the Youth and Violence Committee.

**Building Healthy Families:** The project exceeded nearly all of its goals with regard to the prenatal distribution of educational materials to 519 families and the completion of 511 prenatal risk assessments. 313 families received childbirth education packets. There were 457 births and all parents received postnatal information packets. 336 new parents received a home visit from a Registered Nurse soon after their discharge from the hospital and 42 received a follow-up visit. 259 referrals were made to community-based services to assist the family. Among the referrals were 90 children with elevated blood lead levels. Their families were provided with education on prevention, treatment and abatement of lead poisoning services and referrals for specialized services.

All families are referred to Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) for family support, parent education, information and referral services. CAPS Family Support Workers visited 220 families, 141 of whom chose to continue working with the Family Support Workers. 93% of the goals set by participating families have been achieved in part, because of some 871 referrals to community based services. 83% demonstrated improved parenting skills and knowledge. Children were screened for school readiness and several were referred for additional services. Children were also screened for lead poisoning. Of the 47 children screened at age one, 6 had elevated blood lead levels and received follow-up services.

Child Care Resource & Referral Service: This program provided child care referrals to 73 families in a six month period. 7 families received Child Care Assistance subsidies. 102 child care providers attended a total of 737 hours of professional development training and 7 providers earned college credit. The collaboration between MICA/CCR&R and the Marshalltown Community College is a statewide model for child care professional development. 7 providers participated in the Iowa Program for Infant and ToddlerCaregivers. 12 of the 15 providers attending the Every Child Reads: Birth to Kindergarten training, were able to complete the program. Technical assistance was provided to 22 individuals who are interested in becoming registered family child care providers.

Preschool Wrap-Around Child Care Program: This no cost child care option supports the efforts of low income parents to better their economic status and prospects. Services are available Monday through Thursday following the Head Start program and all day on Friday. 23 children have been enrolled. Program services have allowed both parents of one child to enroll as full time students. A combination of this program and Head Start services has enabled another parent to maintain full time employment. Of the 21 families participating in the program, 13 of the parents work full time and 8 attend school full time. One child was identified as needing special educational assistance and was referred to AEA.

Early ACCESS Transportation Program: 194 families were transported so that their children could attend appropriate child care, preschool, Head Start or Early Head Start programs. Parents were also able to be transported to school or job sites, or back to their homes.

**Marshall County Child Care Services:** This program struggles with high staff turnover due to low wages and minimal benefits. In spite of those obstacles, the program has successfully cared for 132 children, 54% of whom qualify for state Purchase of Service (POS) assistance by virtue of their income and education/employment status.

**West Marshall Community Schools Transportation Service:** 24 children participated in preschool and pre-kindergarten programs offered by West Marshall Community Schools. Empowerment funds provided transportation services so that 16 of those students could participate.

# Muscatine Regional Area

## Empowerment Initiatives

The Muscatine Regional Empowerment Area (M REA) encompasses Muscatine County as well as a portion of Cedar and Louisa Counties. The school districts included in the MEA are Muscatine, Wilton, West Liberty, Louisa-Muscatine and Durant.

### Contact

Mary L. Wildermuth, Empowerment Board Facilitator  
 Muscatine Community School District  
 2705 Cedar Street  
 Muscatine, Iowa 52761  
 Phone: (563) 263-6141 ext. 1167 Fax: (563) 264-1794  
 Email: [mlwilder@muscatine.k12.ia.us](mailto:mlwilder@muscatine.k12.ia.us)

### Vision and Mission

The Muscatine Regional Empowerment Board's Vision is to continuously improve the quality of life for families and children within our region. Our mission is to ensure that parents of children ages 0-5 have access to the necessary tools and resources to raise their children to be happy and productive adults.

### Community Plan

In collaboration with other regional partners the Empowerment Board directs resources to quality health care and literacy initiatives that provide parents, children, and childcare providers with the tools to improve their quality of life and access health care, childcare and educational services that are of the highest quality.

Muscatine Regional Empowerment Area Local Indicators	Desired Outcome
<b>Healthy Children</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible families receive Medicaid/Hawk I information.</li> <li>Families receive info on child health services/ immunizations.</li> <li>Children's immunizations are up to date.</li> </ul>	100% 100% 100%
<b>Children Ready to Succeed in School</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents will report having interacted with their children using emergent literacy techniques.</li> </ul>	85%
<b>Safe and Supportive Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic violence rates of families receiving in-home services will have at least 20% less than the county rate.</li> </ul>	0%
<b>Secure and Nurturing Families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families attend at least 1 educational offering during 12-month period.</li> </ul>	100%
<b>Secure and Nurturing Childcare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program staff attends at least 1 in-service.</li> <li>Families assessed for safety within first 2 visits and upon completion of services.</li> <li>Families surveyed for safety will show improvement by completion of services.</li> </ul>	100% 100% 100%

### **Early Childhood Funded Programs for 2002-2003**

West Liberty Head Start and District Preschool  
Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. Child Care Mentor  
Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. Child Care Vendor/Voucher

### **School Ready Funded Programs for 2002-2003**

Lutheran Social Services HOPES Initiative  
Lutheran Social Services Friends of New Parents Initiative  
Unity Public Health Bavolek Nurturing Initiative  
Muscatine Community School District Partners in Early Learning Initiative  
Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. Preschool Scholarship Initiatives

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

- **Head Start Preschool** established in West Liberty.
- Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. **Mentor** assisted in registering **95** Child Care Providers in the region.
- Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. **Child Care Vendor/Voucher Initiative** accessed child care for **73** children. Average age 2.85.
- Lutheran Social Services research based **HOPES** Initiative served **90** families all accessing Medicaid or private insurance.
- Lutheran Social Services Friends of New Parents served **558** families with newborns.
- Unity Public Health Bavolek Nurturing served **46** families and all received primary care services prescribed by the **American Academy of Pediatrics**.
- Muscatine Community School District Partners in Early Learning provided Literacy Programming to **62** children within 40 families in the region.
- Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N. Preschool Scholarship Initiative served **70** children with **preschool access**. Average age 3.7

# Polk County Community Empowerment

**Every Child Beginning at Birth will be Healthy and Successful**

## Counties in Area

Polk County

## Contacts for Polk County Empowerment Area

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## Vision

Every Child Beginning at Birth will be Healthy and Successful

## Mission

- To ensure positive outcomes for all children in Polk County and strengthen families, by involving all stakeholders (i.e. individuals, families, all levels of government, schools, community agencies, businesses, faith community).
- The Early Childhood Partnership will support the Early Childhood Business plan for community investments that will achieve long term positive results for children, families & neighborhoods.
- The partnership will engage the Human Services Planning Alliance to challenge all stakeholders to own the issues of the early childhood business plan to take action.

## Overview of Community Plan

1. Increase high quality preschool capacity and increase utilization by at-risk children.
2. Coordinate and streamline access to an expanded network of family support, parent education programs and health services.
3. Increase access to primary and preventive health care for at-risk women, children, and families.
4. Ensure the availability and streamline accessibility to high quality childcare for low -income & subsidized children.

## Local Indicators:

- Low birth weight rate
- Teen birth rate
- Infant Mortality Rate
- Founded child abuse rate
- Rate of Immunization by age 2 (public health only)
- Mothers receiving prenatal care in first trimester
- Mothers receiving adequate prenatal care
- Number of NAEYC certified child care centers
- Childcare providers with post high school early childhood courses
- Eligible population enrolled in SCHIP
- Children and families have a medical home
- Children enter school with appropriate preschool experience
- Children enter Kindergarten demonstrating appropriate readiness

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts' Results/Accomplishments; Successes:

Increase high quality preschool capacity and increase utilization by at-risk children.

A strong collaborative has been formed among the 9 Polk County school districts and Drake Head Start to measures for share resources, insure quality of programming, and a commitment to keeping the funding with each child regardless of school district, as long as the child resides in Polk County. Based on community needs, populations and commitment of the school districts communities have chosen either freestanding preschool or vouchers.

- a) Quality, comprehensive preschool and Head Start sites in under-served areas of Polk County.
  - The Des Moines Public School maintained preschool sites (opened in 1999) on the South side utilizing the Shared Vision criteria and provided slots for 32 children in their fee-based preschools.
  - The Des Moines Public Schools added a classroom at the Evelyn Davis Early Learning Academy. This center was reopened in fall 2002, and is a unique community partnership between Human Services Planning Alliance, Des Moines Public Schools, United Way, Drake Head Start and others. This classroom offers full day full year care for infants-kindergarten and is staffed with certified Des Moines Public Schools teachers. This classroom provides slots for 16 children.
  - Drake Head Start maintained a classroom at Mitchellville Elem. in the Southeast Polk School District.
  - Saydel, Ankeny, Urbandale & Johnston maintained their own school based preschools and provided high quality curriculum free tuition for qualified families with certified early childhood teachers.
  - All district based preschool programs have incorporated summer programming to serve eligible children with opportunities for a jumpstart towards kindergarten readiness.
- b) Preschool financial assistance (scholarships) for currently not served, at-risk children residing outside of the Des Moines Public School District.
  - The remaining Polk County districts ( Bondurant- Farrar, North Polk, Southeast Polk, and West Des Moines) have scholarships available to distribute to families (eligible for free/reduced lunch program) within their districts.

- Home Literacy Liaisons / Family Advocates: Positions created in an effort to ensure parent support and involvement in their children's education. Liaisons make home visits, conduct parent workshops, and ensured smooth communications between the school district, parents, children, and the preschool program. And linked families to other Empowerment programs and resources in the community. Liaisons use curriculum such as Ages and Stages and Parents As Teachers to involve parents in their child's development. These liaisons are located in Johnston, Southeast Polk, and West Des Moines districts.

Coordinate and streamline access to an expanded network of family support, parent education programs and health services.

- (a) Maintain a coordinated intake process, common curriculum, and referral system to identify and link families in need of family support services (e.g., home visiting, case management, and parent education) to the most appropriate service provider in the community.
  - The Healthy Start Model for centralized intake and referral, designed for children 0-1 in six high-risk census tracts of the County, has been expanded to serve children birth - 5 years old in all of Polk County.
  - Fourteen case management programs/agencies as part of this Family Support Network agreed upon a uniform standard of care, protocol, common intake form, performance measures, 36 continuums of services & common case-management definitions.
  - Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum is used for prenatal to age one. Ages and Stages is utilized for the children ages 1-5.
- (b) Expansion of current family support services to identify and serve more high-risk families with children birth – 5 years old.
  - Five bi-lingual case managers are on staff in five community based family support programs (Family Enrichment Center, Hispanic Educational Resources, Primary Care Inc., and Young Women's Resource Center) that serve Polk County's growing Latino population.
  - In addition to bi-lingual case managers we have outreach staff, and interpreters speaking 7 languages including Spanish, Vietnamese, and Arabic
- (c) Encouraged participation in and completion of voluntary parent education programs among low-income parents with children.
  - Families being served through the Family Support Network are eligible to receive additional emergency and material assistance (up to \$500) Empowerment funds administered by Polk County General Assistance.
  - Utilized an incentives program established by Visiting Nurse Services to provide parents the ability to earn points for attendance of classes. The points were then exchanged for merchandise at a store located at VNS. Items purchased through the parent incentives program included: clothing, safety equipment, car seats, books & toys, bedding, medical supplies, travel items, diapers, furniture, hygiene products and baby accessories. Empowerment dollars supplied the funds for purchasing the incentive merchandise. Twenty-nine community-based agencies participate in the Storks Nest program.
  - Child Care Resource and Referral Center maintained the Parenting Monthly website. This website provided information to parents, case managers, agencies, and the general population about up-coming parenting classes.

Increased utilization of primary and preventive health care for young children and high-risk pregnant women.

- A joint outreach program between Healthy Polk 2010, the Polk County Health Department, and Empowerment provided mini grants to serve at risk populations in the area of health care prevention
- Maternal and child health services are expanding at four community-based health clinics (S.E. Polk, Ankeny, and La Clinica de la Esperanza) where needs are increasing. This included hiring a full time bi-lingual midwife at La Clinica.
- Family planning services and maternal health services were expanded through two family planning providers (Broadlawns, and Planned Parenthood,) for low income women.
- Continued efforts to expand the use of SCHIP including HAWK-I and Medicaid, as a low-cost insurance provider for at risk families

Ensure the availability of and streamline accessibility to high quality childcare for low-income, subsidized children.

- (a) Streamlined accessibility for parents eligible for subsidized childcare. Polk County maintained a centralized intake process that allows for the coordination of childcare funds from Polk County, City of Des Moines, Empowerment, and United Way.
- (b) Stabilization of 7 inner city childcare centers (Targeted Childcare Centers) by paying the gap between the market price for center-based care and the State (DHS) reimbursement rate. Stabilization funds are being used by the targeted centers to help maintain their current capacity and increase their enrollment.
- (c) Support for NAEYC Accreditation & CDA training for 7 inner city childcare centers (Targeted Childcare Centers). ITERS and ECERS were performed by ISU extension in each classroom. As a results of these quality improvement plans and professional development action plans are being developed at each center. Funds will be used for NAEYC accreditation expenses, staff tuition for higher education, CDA scholarships & substitute teachers. United Way of Central Iowa Early Childhood Initiative, Bank of America, Safe and Stable Schools, and Polk County matched Empowerment funds to support this initiative.
- (d) Increase the number of certified and accredited family day care homes particularly infant care and shift care. The Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Iowa is recruiting, training, and offering incentives to providers to expand quality day care homes.
- (d) Established a continuum of respite care services for high-risk families with children 0-5, which is linked to the Family Support Network.
  - The respite continuum is comprised of three community-based agencies, each of which offers unique planned and or emergency respite care services.
  - These services include State registered childcare homes, licensed foster parent homes, a crisis nursery program, and a licensed shelter program.

## Pottawattamie Community Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Pottawattamie County

### Contact for Area

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### Vision

The vision of the Pottawattamie Community Empowerment Area is to collaborate with key partners to maximize resources in providing programs, services, and supports that lead to accessible child development opportunities supported by strong families who will nurture children ages 0-5 who are physically, socially, and intellectually ready to learn.

Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area has three identified **goals**:

1. Provide parent education, health services, and support for all children ages 0-5.

#### Indicators

- Increased positive parent/child interactions through home visitation services
- Increase referrals received from hospitals for newborns
- Increase immunization rate
- Increase access to well baby care
- Decrease child abuse

#### Program Overview:

Pottawattamie Empowerment has developed a collaborative project with Loess Hills AEA 13, Lutheran Social Services of Iowa, ISU Extension and Visiting Nursing Association to provide a comprehensive home visitation service for children birth to five. The program served 529 families and 639 children during this year. Newborn visits included 293 babies. Program families showed a 62% increase of parent/child interaction. Unfortunately the program received funding cuts from Decat and Shared Visions previously used as matching funds to this program. Pottawattamie County has been subject to a 44% budget cut over the next four years due to the formula based allocation which will directly impact home visitation to families.

2. Provide access to quality, comprehensive and affordable early childhood education programs for ages 0-5.

#### Indicators

- Increase number of available preschool slots
- Increased social, intellectual & physical skills
- Increased quality of programs resulting in school ready child "graduates"

### Program Overview

The Pottawattamie County Empowerment Area Board has partnered with the eight public school districts in our county to provide preschool programming. Seven of the districts have expanded their preschool programs to serve more students via Empowerment funding. Empowerment has maintained an additional 96 preschool slots in the county. However, there is still a waiting list for PreK services. The PreK services will also be reduced due to the formula based allocation of school ready funds.

3. Provide access to quality and affordable child care for children ages 0-5.

### Indicators

- Increased skills and knowledge to support child development for providers
- Increased numbers of licensed/register child care slots
- Increased number of available infant care
- Increased number of accredited child care/PreK programs

### Program Overview

The Empowerment Board has contracted with West Central Development Corporation Child Care Resource and Referral to address the availability and quality of childcare. A child development specialist provides child development information to child care providers in homes and centers to increase quality child care. The Specialist uses the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale as a quality measurement. High/Scope and ChildNet training series has also been implemented for providers in the county. This program has greatly increased the hours of training completed by home based child care providers. This year the number of ChildNet certified providers increased from 7 to 18.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Pottawattamie County released a Request for Proposals (RFP) utilizing carry forward funds to support six additional early childhood enrichment initiatives in the community. The initiatives include:

- Literacy materials for Headstart, families, and LCSD PreK
- High/Scope resources and staff training for community based childcare/PreK
- Incentive program for teen parents
- Playground safety equipment for community based childcare/PreK
- Incentive program to increase parent education and literacy for high risk families

During FY 03, members from Pottawattamie Empowerment have successfully obtained federal and local foundation funds to expand the capacity for Preschool services to four year olds as a pilot project. Unfortunately, the local Empowerment board is facing a reduction in school ready funds and may not be able to continue to fund the matching preschool services that we have been providing for the past four years.

A subcommittee for Empowerment has developed a common Kindergarten Readiness Assessment tool (based on High/Scope) that will be implemented among all eight school districts in Pottawattamie County in FY 04. This tool will be submitted on-line and each school district, building, and kindergarten classroom will be able to receive their own aggregate data to be used for multiple purposes in addition to the countywide Empowerment data. The on-line survey has been designed to link with the same categories as the state kindergarten survey to enable teachers to more accurately and consistently assess their Kindergarten classroom.

## Poweshiek County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Poweshiek

### Contact for Area

Karen Fread, Board Secretary, 210 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Grinnell, IA 50112

### Vision Statement:

All families living within Poweshiek County will have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment.

### Mission Statement:

Assure that families with young children have access to affordable high quality `childcare, early intellectual stimulation for children, be free of child abuse and neglect and have the skills and services needed to be healthy and strong.

### Overview of Community Plan

The priorities established for the initial efforts of the community and the Poweshiek County Empowerment Area Board of Directors are

- Adequate comprehensive family support programs to meet the identified need
- Adequate numbers of well-prepared registered family home child care providers and licensed child care centers to meet the identified need
- Adequate numbers of accessible, available, affordable child care slots to meet the identified need

The Empowerment Area has decided to focus on family support and education, quality childcare providers and affordable child care at this time. The primary focus with the school ready funding will be family support and education. However some of the funding will be utilized to support the childcare home consultant, child care health consultant and mini-grants that assist families with income between 140-200 percent of the federal poverty level with childcare. Early Childhood funding supports a childcare home consultant, preschool services and assistance with childcare.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

Early Childhood funds have been utilized to partially support a Child Care Home Consultant, provider grants for equipment; child care subsidy for families; new provider safety packages, and preschool services.

School Ready Funds were utilized for a home visiting program for high-risk families – “Family Connections”, funding for licensed centers to assist families on a sliding scale, the majority of the costs for a Child Care Home Consultant and a Child Care Health Consultant. Funds carried over by providers from FY02 allocations have been used for a reading program for preschoolers at the library, and education and support for pregnant women and new mothers through the Stork’s Nest Program which was initiated in fiscal year 2002.

### Local Indicators

The board reviewed and updated our local indicators this year. The current indicators are:

#### Early Childhood Environments

Increase basic skill level of providers and increase quality and accessibility of childcare.

Goal 1: Increase number of registered child care providers by 10 during FY03 and FY04. (3-24-03 the number is 46).

Goal 2: To keep increasing by 10 percent the number of childcare providers participating in training during each grant year.

Goal 3: To increase by 60 the number of available child care slots in licensed or registered child care settings each grant year.

#### Health Care for Children

Improve the health status and early stimulation of children; and increase the education and support given to families to impact the health and well being of children

Goal 1: To increase the children screened for lead poisoning to 50% of the number of children served through Family Connections and 25 % of children in child care settings. Education will be provided to Family Connection families and to child care providers by the Child Care Health Consultant.

Goal 2: To increase by five percent the number of home visits provided to new parents in Poweshiek County by June 30, 2001

### Home Visiting, Parent Education and Support

Increase access to a comprehensive family support system for children-at-risk and their families.

Goal 1: To maintain 50% of families involved in Head Start participating in community parenting classes. In explanation add the classes under 21st Century Grant and other parenting classes.

Goal 2: Revise to: To maintain the number of families who are served by Family Connections at a minimum of 15 with goal of full caseload of 20.

Goal 3: Increase the number of families who receive support for child care as they seek quality or crisis child care as funding is available.

### Increase school readiness levels through literacy opportunities and preschool experiences.

Goal 1: To provide each new kindergarten student with a book bag of books when funding is available.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

With the collaborative effects between Child Care Resource & Referral and Poweshiek County Empowerment many local partnerships have emerged. CCR&R has established and maintained a strong working relationship with the local Department of Human Services to assist in the registration process for new Child Development Homes as well as non registered homes. The local Child Care Consultant is the first contract for a Child Care Provider as she/he is introduced to the registration process. The consultant successfully 20 new providers into becoming registered Child Development Homes. The consultant can so conduct a home visit in order to evaluate and assess the provider's home for DHS Child Development Home registration compliance. The Consultant has also continued her support to established providers by participating in trainings and events presented by the local Poweshiek Child Care Provider Support Group.

The child-care health consultant and CCR&R's child-care home consultant have formed a very close collaborative relationship in Poweshiek County. The home consultant accompanies the health consultant on home visits to registered child-care providers. This approach allows the health consultant to have the provider's undivided attention while the home consultant interacts with the children. The home consultant is able to "touch base" with the provider and also then available for any questions the provider may have. The health consultant and the home consultant work well as a team to promote both roles, prevent duplication of services, and to develop strategies to meet providers and parents' child-care related questions or needs.

Mother-Child Wellness Program (MCWP) collaborates with Early ACCESS by attending regular Early ACCESS regional council and regional Early ACCESS executive meetings and providing input on delivery of services and needs in Poweshiek County. MCWP and Public Health staff attends monthly local Early ACCESS meetings to discuss families' needs, services being delivered, and plans for addressing further needs. Staff from AEA #6, MICA (FaDSS, Family Connections, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs), and DHS also attend. These meetings have greatly increased agencies knowledge of local services and decreased duplication of services.

Poweshiek Empowerment has successfully supported a Child Net Training series in the empowerment area in order to improve the quality of care environments. This fiscal year seven child care providers attended and four providers achieved certification. The Child Net training series draws upon local agencies and professionals to present the Child Net training modules. Agencies that offered training support include MICA, ISU Extension, 21 Century, CCR&R and local business professionals.

Grinnell Day Care Center's sliding fee scale is its "success story." The scale historically has been made possible by Grinnell United Way, and it recently has received added, generous contributions from Poweshiek Empowerment. In the last year alone, Empowerment's component of the sliding fee fund has enabled 11 more children (vs. FY02) below 185%PL to receive assistance. In addition, Empowerment's contributions to the sliding scale fund have permitted the center to lower costs for one child to the range of 10 – 15% of total family income (down from 14 - 18% the prior year).

A success story as a result of Family Connections, our home visiting program for high risk families is shared by the family developmental specialist: When I recruited this family of five into Family Connections, the husband and wife were unemployed. They had just been both laid off. The wife was diagnosed with MS and a few weeks later learned that she was pregnant. They moved into Gracie Park, (then called Greenway) to conserve some money. Their long term goal was to buy a home. First we worked on the employment issues. He found a job and they could afford to rent a home. The apartment was too small with 2 Jr. High age girls and a junior in high school plus with a new baby on the way. After saving pennies for almost a year they could afford, with the help of her mom, to put a down payment on their own home. They had a goal and took the direction to achieve it. Now the family of six lives spaciously in their very own home.



## Ringgold County Empowerment Area

“Coloring a Brighter Future”

### Counties in Area

Ringgold County serving the school districts of Clearfield, Diagonal and Mount Ayr.

### Contact for Area:

Judy Hensley, Ringgold County Extension, 101 N. Polk, Mount Ayr, IA 50854  
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### Vision

“To Color a Brighter Future” by empowering families through education, involvement and connections to prepare children to be life long learners.

### Mission

Focus the efforts of parents, schools, childcare providers, community service providers, and citizens on the well being of young children. This is based on the premise that all families have strengths and parents are experts on their child. Ringgold Empowerment seeks to join families from all socioeconomic levels as one community.

### Overview of Community Plan

Priority #1, Children Ready to Begin School: Supporting families’ child rearing efforts is critically important for ensuring that more young children enter school ready to succeed.

Priority # 2, Stable and Supportive Families: Families must be supported in their efforts to be productive members of a caring community, manage challenge behavior both in and out of the home, and promote strong parent-child relationships.

Priority #3, Quality Child Care: Quality family-based and center-based childcare must build on the existing strengths of families and be responsive to their needs.

### Local Indicators

- Desired Result #1: Children Ready to Begin School Indicators
- Percentage of children in kindergarten with preschool experience
- Percentage of students qualifying for special education
- Desired Result #2: Healthy Children Indicators
- Rate of low-birth rate babies
- Rate of immunization appropriate for age 2
- Rate of children receiving developmental screenings
- Health service availability
- Rate of home visits
- Percentage of children screened for lead poisoning prior to age 6
- Desired Result #3: Quality Child Care
- Rate of child care slots available
- Rate of participation in training
- Desired Result # 4: Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Number of Child Abuse Prevention trainings
- Number of presentations by child advocate
- Number of children and families involved in domestic abuse

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

Within each priority area, specific desired results were identified and addressed. The services used to reach the desired results are:

- Incentives for child care provider training and safety education to enhance quality childcare
- capacity in support of parents obtaining or retaining employment.
- Preschool services
- Child care services
- Parent education and support
- Family advocacy

### **“Showcase” of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Ringgold Empowerment School Ready services are benefiting children age 3 to 5 in this rural area. Previously, children had to be eligible to attend Head Start or the Early Childhood Special Education program in the Mount Ayr School district. The preschool programs of Head Start, Clearfield, Diagonal, and Family Resource Center are filled to capacity. Two of the preschools are accredited by NAEYC (Clearfield and Diagonal) and Mount Ayr is progressing very well toward meeting requirements. It is a top goal of the Family Resource Center to become accredited. Empowerment resources have positively impacted all of the programs to help assist children and their families to be assured of continuity and longevity of quality early childhood classrooms enhancing children as they prepare for their formal education. Families are not as likely to enroll younger children in Kindergarten due to the affordability and availability of quality preschool programs. The elementary schools report an increased percentage of students being 6 years of age when entering Kindergarten. Parents of all income levels are utilizing affordable, quality preschool and are taking advantage of a wonderful opportunity to ensure their children are ready for school socially, mentally, academically and physically. In 2003, 94 % of students entering Kindergarten have attended preschool.

Preschools and public schools are collaborating to improve transitioning and continuity for children's experience in Kindergarten. Each preschool has formal agreements for sharing information and promoting involvement of parents so success is possible for everyone involved. Preschools, Head Start and the Early Childhood Special Education Preschool staff strive to collaborate in programming and in development activities.

The Parents as Teachers program is offered to families in the area with children age 0-5 as a free program supporting early childhood education. The voluntary program provides monthly, personalized home visits by highly trained and dedicated staff, group meetings, screening services for early identification and intervention, and a network of families with enhanced skills and tools to work with. Ringgold County Public Health provides the service. PAT has assisted in helping achieve a 97% immunization rate for children 2 years old. Lead poisoning screening for under age 6 continues to be a great need. In FY 03, 16.3% of children screened were found to have lead levels elevated greater than 10. The funding for this program is being eliminated, and the partners are working diligently to secure another financial source or partner to continue the program.

Parenting Hand in Hand, a family advocate service, is provided through the local ISU Extension Service. The program provides service to at-risk families and other residents with information, support, and skills needed to raise healthy, productive citizens and to promote a healthy community in which all residents thrive. PHIH provides education to childcare providers through TANF to 18 childcare providers and 108 children. The “Every Child Reads” program was provided to childcare providers, making a difference in the children's ability to listen, associate words and pictures, and to anticipate what is next. Literacy and lunch, provided through the Family Storyteller program, impacted nineteen adults and their preschool age children, through a series of 5 sessions to the Family Resource Center. Parents report that it was beneficial to enhance techniques and a joy to spend time with their child in his or her childcare/preschool setting. Expectations in the county have been raised causing the social, emotional, and physical development of children to be enhanced.

Ringgold County Extension serves as fiscal agent and coordinates Ringgold County Empowerment Area activities. There is continual effort made to inform the families and public of the need for services for children age 0-5 and their well-being. Preparing a child for school readiness lasts a lifetime and impacts are forever.

Ringgold County Empowerment is making progress in the areas of school readiness, stable and supportive families and quality childcare. Improvement is evident as a result of the programs and services funded by the Iowa Legislature through Empowerment. The Empowerment Board and service providers continuity allow for excellent environments for children. Community concerns expressed are that prior to Empowerment we had bare basics for 0-5 children. The decrease of existing services due to Empowerment cuts is not in the best interest of our children. Ringgold County has the most children in poverty and yet this Empowerment area is cut the greatest. Additional needs continue to be identified. We continue to search for funds due to the 25% decrease in empowerment funding, and it will be reduced even more in the future.



## Counties in Area

Scott

## Contact for Area:

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## Vision and Mission

The vision of the Scott County Empowerment Area is “coordination and expansion of resources and services in the community to build environments for young children that enable them to be physically healthy, intellectually curious, emotionally sound and socially competent. Led by citizens, this system of public and private entities provides a continuum of seamless services targeted at helping all children reach their full potential.” Integral to our mission is a commitment to realizing better outcomes for the most vulnerable children in Scott County and making a significant contribution to advancing Iowa’s Early Childhood Vision - “Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful”.

## Overview of Community Plan

The Scott County Empowerment Area plan outlines a child and family centered framework for building a responsive, effective early childhood system, incorporating strategies designed to make incremental gains in key indicators of child and family well-being. Updated annually, the plan is an outgrowth of a community-wide mapping process begun in 1998 to identify a preferred future for the county’s youngest children and to evaluate community assets and deficiencies which would form the foundation for decision-making on how to achieve the vision. Early in the process significant gaps in services to families with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers were documented and subsequently specific strategies to address the most pressing needs became the core of Scott County’s **Steps to Success/School Ready** plan.

Much of the *Steps to Success* initiative is focused upon building capacity within four broad areas essential to realizing good outcomes for young children and their families.

### Health

*Goals:* To identify at-risk children as early as possible.

To have a continuum of programs to serve at-risk children and families.

*Key Strategies* – emphasis on development of and support for preventive and early intervention services.

### Early Childhood Environments

*Goals:* To increase access to high quality early learning opportunities for children ages 0 – 5.

To increase basic school readiness skills for children ages 0-5 via an early learning environment.

*Key Strategies* – comprehensive approach to ensuring that all young children are receiving safe, nurturing, developmentally appropriate, and financially accessible care.

### Parent Education and Support

*Goal:* To increase parental involvement with children to encourage early intellectual stimulation.

*Key Strategies* – establishment/enhancement of resources to build parenting and literacy skills, especially for parents, adoptive parents and foster parents of at-risk and special needs children.

### Public Awareness

*Goal:* To increase awareness among the public-at-large regarding the importance of the early years.

*Key Strategies* – Multi-media and community education activities to encourage higher level of financial and social commitment to achieving school readiness goals.

### **Local Indicators**

In addition to the statewide indicators, Scott County Empowerment Area funds have been appropriated to address the following:

- Rate of infants born chemically exposed
- Rate of children testing positively for lead
- Number of families receiving subsidized day care assistance to work or attend school
- Number of accredited child care facilities (centers and family day care homes)
- Number of childcare providers trained in brain research strategies
- Number of all day, all year preschool slots for at-risk children
- Number of families with access to an adult mentor
- Number of individuals indicating an increase in knowledge of early childhood issues
- Number of family day care homes moving from non-registered to registered status

### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

#### Health

Considerable investment of Empowerment dollars has been made in Scott County's Cornerstone project – a prevention and early intervention program which provides education and mentoring services to pregnant women, universal assessment following childbirth, and in-home visits to at-risk families. Historically, Scott County Empowerment has been strongly wedded to the concept that at-risk families must receive appropriate support as early as possible to maximize opportunities for successful child outcomes. Other programs funded by Empowerment allow for a continuum of care for families needing additional support.

#### Early Childhood Environments

Efforts have focused upon: increasing the availability, affordability and quality of care and education settings by: coordinating and financing training opportunities for center and home-based care givers; funding scholarship programs for parents to access quality care for their children; and augmenting child care capacity by assisting providers with acquisition of equipment linked with appropriate training.

#### Parent Education and Support

A variety of community and home-based programs have been funded to build competence and confidence in parenting skills including support for early literacy sites which foster positive parent and child interaction, home visitation services which provide at-risk parents with access to more intensive direct assistance, and general parent education workshops with tips for promoting optimal growth and development during the early years.

#### Public Awareness

Over the past year, Scott County Empowerment has underwritten a productive regional media campaign with the help of our local NBC affiliate, local paper, and a major billboard advertising company. Efforts have produced greater recognition of the importance of the early years and Empowerment as a focal point for leadership in advancing early childhood programs and services.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Scott County Empowerment funded a Family Day Care Home Compliance Auditor, who began her duties in July, 2002. Over the past year, she completed spot checks with 211 registered day care homes (over 65% of the total registered homes in the county). In addition to assuring compliance with health and safety standards, the auditor has been able to enhance the care and education environments for infants and young children in home-based settings in a way that is acceptable to providers. Providers have received technical assistance related to creation of learning spaces, understanding and responding to the new regulations, acquisition of developmentally appropriate equipment, best practices, record keeping, and information about accessing on-going training opportunities.

## **STORY COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA** **“Community Planning for Children and Families”**

### **Area Served**

The Story County Empowerment Area serves all of the Story County community, which includes the following seven school districts: Ames, Collins-Maxwell, Colo-Nesco, Ballard-Huxley, Roland-Story, Gilbert, and Nevada.

### **Contact Person**

Annette M. Dunn, Coordinator	Phone: 515-268-2276
Story County Empowerment Area	Fax: 515-296-2672
126 South Kellogg, Suite 101	Email: adunn1@dhs.state.ia.us
Ames, Iowa 50010	

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of the Story County Empowerment Area is to increase our capacity to care for one another and ourselves by working together through collaborative efforts. Initially, the county will focus on families with children, ages 0-5, to ensure they are ready to begin school.

### **Mission Statement**

We believe that the Empowerment initiative will serve to support Story County’s mission to:

1. Integrate existing planning and funding efforts into a seamless, community-centered system.
2. Provide a vehicle for collaboration across a life-span approach service-delivery system.
3. Achieve accountability through measurable and meaningful outcomes.

### **Overview of Community Plan**

**Needs/Priority #1:** Provide affordable, quality and accessible early childhood experiences. Including child and infant childcare.

**Needs/Priority #2:** Provide educational training and support for parents and childcare providers.

**Needs/Priority #3:** Provide coordinated prenatal and postnatal services.

### **Local Indicators**

Story County tracks these indicators from 1999 – 2002 as our indicators to be consistent with the state indicators. See annual report for indicator tracking results Number of licensed child care centers.

- Number of registered family child care programs.
- Number of licensed preschools.
- Incidence of domestic violence.
- Incidence of child abuse cases accepted.
- Incidence of infants born affected by drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care in first trimester.
- Incidence of infants born of low and very low birthweight.
- Trend data on family poverty rate.
- Percentage of births to families without medical insurance.
- Immunization rate of county (starting at age 2).

### **Primary Services Provided with Empowerment Funding** **EARLY CHILDHOOD (TANF)**

Services Provided: The following is a summary of services provided and in development in Story County to address and enhance quality childcare capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment.

The CCR Infant Care Network program recruits, supports, and rewards family childcare providers caring for infants and toddlers with in-home consultations and support meetings. CCR’s Provider Training improves the accessibility and quality of child care programs by recruiting new family child

care providers, providing technical assistance, and coordinating training opportunities for providers. Child Care Assistance provides funds for low-income families who have no other resources to assist them in paying for child care services. The Crisis Child Care Program run through LSS provides a temporary, safe environment for children ages 0-5 whose parents are unable to meet their needs due to overwhelming circumstances or an emergency. There is one program co-funded by TANF and School Ready dollars. The Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency's Head Start Programs, offer a comprehensive range of services to children and their families including educational, physical, dental and mental health services, special needs services and family service/parent involvement. McCallsburg Elementary School, in the Colo-Nesco School District, offers a half-day preschool program 2-3 days a week and a full-time, part-time, drop-in childcare for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The staff is employed by the school district. The University Community Childcare Comfort Zone is a full and part-time day care for mildly ill children from infant through preschoolers eligible for full-time care and kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade eligible for before and after school care.

### **SCHOOL READY**

Services Provided: The following are a summary of services provided and in development in Story County to address and enhance school-readiness issues.

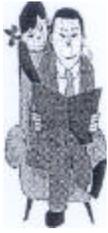
Parents as Teachers (PAT)- is a research-based, nationally acclaimed, early childhood family education and support program designed to help all parents give their children the best possible start in life. The program empowers families to recognize their strengths and become their child's first and most influential teacher. The MELD Parent Program is also a research-based nationally acclaimed program. It provides information and support to parents in a group setting over a two-year period with the goal of strengthening families at critical transitions early in the parenting process. The Family Nutrition program helps families with young children make wise food choices and stretch their food dollars to raise healthy children. Healthy Futures is a program providing home visitation and on-site dental screenings by professionals to promote healthy minds and bodies. School Ready dollars also support the Shared Vision programs run through Ames Community Schools. These 2 programs serve children 3 and 4 years old who reside within the Ames School District boundary. Families with 130% of the poverty threshold are given priority for these programs. Parent-Links provides educational training for the parents in the Shared Vision program. Wrap Around Child Care provides Shared Vision families financial assistance for childcare at the preschool center. As mentioned above, Mid-Iowa Community Action Head Start is co-funded by Early Childhood dollars.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

The Empowerment Project maintains close communication and coordination with two local funding and planning initiatives, the Analysis of Social Service Evaluation Team (ASSET) and the Story County Decategorization Project, in regard to child welfare/juvenile justice issues and services in Story County. The ASSET process includes representation from Story County, the City of Ames, Story County United Way and the ISU Government of the Student Body and is responsible for making funding recommendations in children and family services of approximately \$2,928,525/year. As well, the Empowerment Coordinator is also the Decategorization Coordinator and the Administrative Team member for the ASSET process (representing Story County DHS), which enhances the coordination and collaborative work conducted with all community initiatives.

The Empowerment Area has considered contributing funds to the ASSET process but to date has not determined how that could occur. ASSET makes annual funding decisions in January prior to the new fiscal year and Empowerment is not aware of its next year's funding at that time in the fiscal period.

By the end of FY03, Story County had an increase in the availability of registered family child care slots for children by 43%. Along with this, Story County increased the number of family child care programs available to children by 39%. This is significant in the quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood experiences for the children in our area. Our goal is to then increase the ability of the children in Story County to be successful in school later in life.



# TAMA COUNTY EMPOWERMENT AREA

129 W. High Street, Toledo, IA 52342

PH: (641) 484-4788 (or) 1-866-484-4788

FAX: (641) 484-5447 e-mail: [tcphhc@tamacounty.org](mailto:tcphhc@tamacounty.org)

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## Contact for Area

Lori Johnson, Empowerment coordinator  
Tama County Public Health & Home Care

## Vision & Mission

The Tama County Empowerment Area (TCEA) believes that:

- It is the responsibility of the community to support families in raising their children. Experiences during the preschool years greatly influence individuals throughout their lives.
- Parents are the first and most important teachers and models for their children. Parents need information and support from the community in meeting the developmental needs of their children.
- Children need to be healthy in order to develop to their optimum potential.
- Children need safe, secure, supporting and nurturing environments in their own homes, childcare homes or childcare centers to develop their optimum potential.
- Children need enriching and stimulating experiences during the preschool years to develop their optimum potential and be ready for success in school.
- It is important to value and respect individuality and cultural/ethnic/racial diversity-
- All citizens regardless of socioeconomic status are entitled to quality education, health, and social services
- Children and families need quality and affordable childcare services to benefit their optimum potential.
- Collaboration among service providers and families is necessary to maximize resources and assist families effectively and efficiently.
- Family centered support is essential in order to help families develop to their optimum potential.

The Tama County Empowerment Area partners are committed to working together and collaboratively developing a family centered support and service delivery system for children and families to help citizens' lead happy, healthy and productive lives.

## Overview of Community Plan & Primary Services Provided

- The program initiatives are to provide/support:
- home visits to parents with children birth through age 5,
- .work with Child Care Resource & Referral to assure that there are adequate childcare opportunities in our area,
- provide resources and training opportunities to Child Care providers in order to improve the quality of care in the child care environment,
- Support the two licensed registered Day Care Centers in Tama County, Pied Piper Preschool & Childcare, Traer, and Kid's Corner Daycare, Tama, which service the North Tama, South Tama and Sac & Fox School Districts.
- Support Healthy Families Programs
- Lead Coordination/follow-up
- Immunizations opportunities made available
- Parent education classes
- Dental screenings with fluoride varnishing
- Preschool & Respite Scholarships
- Preschool Teacher/Assistant

We are working with Child Care Resource & Referral to assure that there are adequate childcare opportunities in our area. As well as provide resources and training opportunities to Child Care providers in order to improve the quality of care in the child care environment.

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

We are very fortunate in our area to have such an active board and other attendees come to our meetings. By their efforts, we are able to avoid duplication of services; enhance our efforts to provide services and meet our goals for our area; combine planning efforts to provide services/home visits to those that are higher risk; and to jointly collaborate to provide the much needed service in Tama County.

Attendance at our meetings has improved this year. Empowerment board member turnover continues to be a concern and we feel fortunate to find people willing to volunteer their time and participate at the meetings.

This is the third year that we have received any School Ready funding. Home visitation program has been implemented and expanded -with the efforts from Tama County Public Health, ISU Extension, Mid-Iowa Community Action and AEA 6.

Child Care Consultant has been able to increase the day care provider possibilities in Tama County. Collaboration between Child Care Consultant and development of the Health Consultant role has increased numbers and quality of childcare businesses.

We have successfully collaborated on sub-committees to determine how funding should be allocated and be fair with distribution. We consider this "putting aside turf issues" a major accomplishment. Through the collaborative efforts of the Child Care Consultant, childcare center directors, and child care home care providers; a childcare support group has been formed. Empowerment has made this possible.

Resources available in Tama County were not readily available. A sub-committee has worked on the compilation of this information and has produced a brochure explaining what services are available.

A brochure explaining the curriculum used for home visits is still being utilized.

Empowerment has funded Parents as Teachers training for staff doing on-going home visits.

Three members attended the Every Child Reads program, and have begun training home care providers in the area.

On-going training is done at each meeting to provide the Empowerment Board the opportunity to learn about the different programs that are provided with the Empowerment Funding



## Taylor County Community Empowerment Area

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Bedford, Iowa 50833  
(712) 523-2137  
Fax: (712) 523-2139  
[hlumbard@iastate.edu](mailto:hlumbard@iastate.edu)  
Heidi Lumbard, Coord.

### Vision and Mission

All families in Taylor County will have access to quality services to meet their physical, mental, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. The Empowerment Board believes through collaboration between agencies and the community, services can be provided that are comprehensive, integrated, and family centered. Through community partnering, barriers will be reduced to enable efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health and human services.

### Overview of Community Plan

- ◆ All children will enter school “ready to learn”.
- ◆ Access to a quality preschool experience for 100% of the children in Taylor County ages 3-5.
- ◆ 100% of all children in Taylor County ages 0-5 will participate in at least one Taylor County Community Empowerment Area program before age five.
- ◆ Promote projects that complement the current continuum of services to avoid duplication of effort.
- ◆ Assist programs that are family focused, sustain child care capacity, aid low-income families with children birth to five years old, increase school readiness, and promote healthy children and families.
- ◆ Promote collaborative and innovative problem-solving to meet the needs of our community.

### Local Priorities

Taylor County Community Empowerment embraces the three main areas listed below serving families of children 0-5 within the school districts of Bedford, New Market, and Lenox.

Preschool Opportunities	Parent Education	Quality Child Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Preschool availability for every child</li> <li>◆ Preschool opportunities for at-risk, underprivileged families</li> <li>◆ Optimize health services to all preschoolers</li> <li>◆ Optimize educational staff development for preschool teachers</li> <li>◆ Children Ready to Succeed in School</li> <li>◆ Improve language skills of second language learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Expansion of Parents as Teachers Program</li> <li>◆ Parent Education Classes available for every parent in Taylor County</li> <li>◆ Preschool outreach to parents</li> <li>◆ Parents as Teachers outreach to preschools</li> <li>◆ Access to books by parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Culturally competent preschool to wrap around programs</li> <li>◆ Increase quality of child care</li> <li>◆ Increase education of child care providers</li> <li>◆ Increase capacity of child care</li> <li>◆ Increase parents ability to obtain or retain employment</li> <li>◆ Coordinate Wrap Around Care with Preschool</li> </ul>

## Summary of Services and Successes



*Precious People Preschool: addition of breakfast for Head Start requirements*



*Car Seat Safety Event: Lori Henrichs above fitting a seat, Loretta Dillon beside the car writing down information*

**Week of the Young Child Celebration: coordinated by Tinker Tots Preschool**



Precious People Preschool coordinated with Head Start this year to provide 4 slots in Lenox. The preschool had to expand its day, offer breakfast and lunch, as well as make some small adjustments to their curriculum and planning.

Week of the young child was celebrated at Tinker Tots Preschool this year along with children from Head Start, and local home child care providers. There were over 70 children who released balloons, sang songs, ate cookies and had a great time being a child.

Homecoming in Bedford marked the big county-wide car seat safety checkup event. Sixty seats were inspected with a 93% misuse rate found. Those who needed them received a new car seat properly installed. Many of the parents who stopped by were enrolled in our home visitation programs as two of the inspectors are home visitors.

With the addition of Child Care Health Consultant and Child Care Educator, all of the known child care providers, registered and non-registered, have been receiving information to help increase the quality of their service. To celebrate this success, along with 5 providers completing their Child Development Associate class hours, we held a child care provider appreciation party. Over \$250 was donated by local businesses for door prizes.



*Child Care Provider Appreciation Party: pictured are licensed center staff, preschool staff, home providers, and empowerment board members.*

## Union County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Union

### Contact for Area

Bob Brown  
Union County Empowerment Chairperson  
1704 Mt. Pisgah Road  
Thayer, IA 50254  
641- 763-2504  
Email: bbrown1704@yahoo.com

Jody Green  
Union County Empowerment Coordinator  
1109 N. Lincoln  
Creston, IA 50801  
641-782-2443  
Email: jjgreen@mddc.com

### Vision Statement

We empower our community to provide an environment in which all children 0-5 have the opportunity to grow to their fullest potential.

### Overview of Community Plan

Through collaborative efforts the goal to build on family strengths, to identify needs, to remove barriers and to respond to gaps in services. Assessments have guided efforts to focus on current issues with emphasis on:

- Promoting availability of services
- Parenting education and support in non-traditional settings
- Opportunity for all children to have quality and enriched experiences that enhance development
- Recruiting and retaining qualified, nurturing childcare providers and educators

### Summary of Services Provided With Empowerment Funding

- Children's Education
- Parent Education and Support
- Immunizations
- New Parents and Babies
- Quality Child Care Providers

### Local Indicators

#### Early Childhood Programs

# of safety concerns noted in DHS spot checks  
# of safety concerns noted in pre self-assessments (-)  
# of safety concerns rectified in post self-assessments(+)  
# of providers participating in the safety in-service(+)  
Training hours of child care providers(+)  
# of providers meeting NAEYC learning environment standards(+)

Learning opportunities offered to parents(+)  
# of registered child care providers(+)  
# of child care providers participating in CCR&R(+)  
# of child care providers participating in CACFP(+)  
# of non-registered child care providers(-)

### School Ready Programs

# of accredited child care centers/preschool environments  
# of accredited child providers(in-home)  
Rate of poverty of children 0-5(at or below 185% poverty)  
% of parents attending parent teacher conference  
#of parents enrolled in Parents As Teachers program  
Drop out rate  
% of children with preschool experience  
% of fourth grade students reading at a proficient level  
% of parent using knowledge of development  
(self -assessment PAT)  
Rate of literacy enrichment in child learning environment  
Referrals made to other community resources and followed  
up (PAT)  
# of"uninsured" families served

Rate of births to mother under age 20  
Rate of major employers with optional leave for  
employees  
Rate of accessibility of child care for sick children  
# of registered slots available and used  
Unemployment rate  
% of accredited home-based child care providers  
Rate of family conflict: % of founded child abuse  
Time parents spend with child playing and reading  
% of 2 year olds immunized  
# of immunization clinics  
Referrals made to other community resources and  
followed up (Maternal Nurse)

### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Accomplishments/Results; Successes**

The Union County Empowerment Area Board operates with input from local programs, individuals, and Family T .I.E.S.(Taking Responsibility, Investing Resource, Encouraging Empowerment, Supportive Communities)

Union County Empowerment Board was able to assist 13 programs/agencies this year. Those programs/agencies that benefited from empowerment funding in Union County include the following: 5 preschool centers, including Trinity, Creative Beginnings, Successful Beginnings, Joyful Sparks, and Discovery Kids, one in home child care provider, Crisis Child Care, Child Care Food Program, Growing Readers and Writers in Union County, MA TURA Action, including Car Seat Safety, The Family Rewards Program and early childhood programs through TANF funding; Conference speakers, Greater Community Hospital including: Parents as Teachers, Maternal Child Health, and the Immunizations Program.

Union County Empowerment was again able to offer Preschool Scholarships to each preschool in Union County. Four preschools in Union County utilized these funds to provide scholarships to 23 students that otherwise would have been unable to attend preschool do to financial difficulties.

Several preschool programs received funding to purchase items to enhance their learning environments.

Empowerment has been extremely helpful in purchasing materials that are beneficial to our preschool program. Without Empowerment we wouldn't have as many experiences with our preschoolers. The preschoolers have thoroughly enjoyed the many items that we have been able to purchase. Getting new stuff is so much fun.

Union County Empowerment provided funding to "Growing Readers and Writers in Union County" this year. This team along with the collaboration of Parents As Teachers, the Literacy team, Head Start, Southwestern Comm. College, Father Connection Project and Iowa State Savings Bank along with many volunteers in the community provided four Family Fun Nights for the community with supper and activities for the whole family and a free book for children age 0-5.

# Empowerment

## Contact

Glenda Battles, WCEB Secretary  
Warren County Caring Connections  
301 North Buxton, Suite 203  
Indianola IA 50125  
515/961-1161 (FAX 515/961-1083, [caringconnections@co.warren.ia.us](mailto:caringconnections@co.warren.ia.us))

## Vision and Mission

To develop and implement an initiative that will enable the collaborative effort of citizens and professionals to develop and utilize all the resources available to strengthen families and address the needs of parents and children in order to assure all children have the skills necessary to succeed in school.

## Overview of Community Plan

WCEB has identified and prioritized the following needs. They are the focus of our Community Plan:

1. Every child has access to preventive health care services and health care coverage.
2. Every child has an opportunity to have a positive early learning pre-school experience, particularly those children whose families need assistance with transportation and/or payment of tuition.
3. Increase the capacity for quality early learning home environments through more opportunities for parents to learn about quality early child development, parenting skills, nurturing and safety awareness.
4. Increase the number of quality childcare providers, the ability of those providers to get quality training and financial assistance, so every child has access to quality child care.

## Local Indicators

1. Healthy Children
  - Increase access to preventive health care services
  - Increase the number of children with health care coverage
  - Increase access to social, emotional and mental health services
2. Children Ready to Succeed in School
  - Increase the opportunity for affordable quality early learning environments for all children
  - Increase family capacity to provide a quality early learning environment
3. Secure and Nurturing Families
  - Increase the safety of children in their home environments
  - Increase positive relationships between children and their parents
  - Increase effective opportunities to learn about child development and parenting skills
4. Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments
  - Increase the number of high quality child care/early learning environments for all children
  - Increase parent and community knowledge about quality child care/early learning environments
  - Increase the accessibility and affordability of high quality child care/early learning environments for all children.

## Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

1. **Caring Connections**
  - Home visitation program for any Warren County family with children 0-5 years old.
  - Provides a central point for other appropriate services to handle social, mental health, emotional, preventive health care, health care coverage, child development, and parenting.
  - Visiting RN discusses and assesses child nutrition, growth, development, health, also discusses parenting, stress management, parental substance abuse and support systems.
  - Visiting RN assesses home environment for safety, stability and as a quality early learning environment.
2. **Parents as Teachers**
  - Voluntary, universal access parent education and support, home visiting program for Warren County families with children 0-5 years
  - Neuroscience, research-based curriculum
  - Certified Parent Educators provide monthly, individualized visits with families and child care providers
  - Parent educators conduct parent or parent/child meetings or programs
  - Children are screened for developmental delays at appropriate ages
  - Enrolled parents and child care providers receive appropriate information on child development and how to enhance development
  - Referral to community resources as needed
3. **Child Resource and Referral**
  - Home Consultant assists perspective child development home providers through the registry process. Home visits are made and checklists completed to monitor progress. Some equipment is provided to meet the safety requirements of registration. Technical assistance is available to the providers

- Provider Services Coordinator is available for technical assistance and training for the registered and non-registered providers and licensed center staff as they meet the training requirements. Incentives and mini-grants are provided to meet registry requirements and enhance existing programs. Scholarships are given for providers to attend some training such as CPR/First Aid and conferences.
- Limited services are offered to parents.

#### 4. Wee Care

- Free, State licensed nursery open to all Warren County children ages 6 weeks through K; a community service “break-time” for parents from the stresses of daily parenting.
- 6 2-hour sessions per school-year week; 4 2-hour sessions per summer-time week; 19 children/session.
- Provides a safe and nurturing environment for children; educational materials, programs for parents/care-givers; and links families with other Warren County services and resources.
- Wee Care Respite Nursery is a program of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of WC.

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

Overall, **WCEB** has a great mix of people on Board. Through the Board’s “over-achiever!” membership it is working in cooperation with: Indianola and Norwalk Chambers of Commerce, Warren County Schools, the Indianola Mayor’s ACTION Community Team, Total Living Center, Helping Hand, Christian Opportunity Center, Norwalk Kiwanis, Indianola Lion’s Club, Indianola Ministerial Association, Simpson College, United Way Council of Warren County, Warren County Economic Development, and Domestic Violence Coalition. Our required membership from WC Board of Health, WC Health Services, Board of Supervisors, DHS, educators from Indianola and Norwalk gives WCEB a well-rounded collaborative, networked effort.

**Caring Connections’** collaborative efforts have grown to 63 individuals and organizations throughout Warren County – they’ve added 49 new partners this past fiscal year! (Listed in Section II, Section IX and Attachment A.) The new collaborators not only represent a nice increase in those numbers, but they are **QUALITY** partners. They reflect shop owners, organizations, agencies and private individuals who take seriously Caring Connection’s place in their community – and want to play a part. Caring Connections’ main accomplishment was the expansion of the number of people involved in making quilts for every newborn admitted to the program. This has turned into a wonderful, heart-warming effort. The WC Piecemaker’s Quilting Guild is the main supplier, but they’ve added 11 retired individuals to the list who are thrilled that some unknown, newborn will be using one of **THEIR** quilts! An un-identified photo is sent to the quilter showing the baby on their quilt – each photo is numbered so the quilter knows how many quilts she’s donated. Caring Connections has become known throughout Warren County because of this effort of kindness on the part of our Senior Community. The quilts are truly our biggest success story! The lucky baby and mother who get a beautiful quilt are so touched by this unknown quilter’s kindness that it draws them into their community as well as their commitment to CC. The collaboration with the Indianola Public Library has also grown. Not only do they allow a huge 45% discount on the two board books given at home visits, and the use of their meeting room at no charge for CC’s quarterly Workshops, they are now using CC as a distributor for a packet of several **FREE** coupons and information for visiting the Library. (For a complete list of gifts presented throughout the home visiting schedule, see Attachment B.)

It’s been a **GREAT** year!

**Caring Connections** has also achieved great results from a change to the program’s structure. They were having difficulty getting appointments with some higher risk single moms. After several attempts at setting up a home visit failed, rather than risk losing these children altogether they created a system whereby these moms got routine “interactive” questionnaire mailings regarding expected growth and development directed at their child’s age. (These moms now also get yearly booklets highlighting the 40 Developmental Assets.) This new procedure has brought needed help to children who are at high risk, some of these moms have responded and are now in the home visitation program – it’s been a great success story!

**Child Care Resource and Referral** worked with the Warren County Health Services to provide training in health and safety, infant massage, mandatory reporting and universal precautions. Wee Care provided staff for child care during the *Love and Logic* series. ISU Extension provided staff for the *Family Storyteller* sessions and the *playground training* session. Prevention Concepts collaborates with staff on issues that providers should know about. This year it was a presentation on *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome*. The Iowa Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers provided a specialist for a six week series. Better Kid Care satellite programs were offered in collaboration with ISU Extension.

The Home Consultant has a good working relationship with the Department of Human Services staff in Warren County. They have worked together to provide training to go over the new registration requirements. They have an on going relationship that supports the future and existing providers.

**Wee Care** continues to collaborate with many agencies, businesses, churches and organizations who all help make this program a success. Annually the Lions Club conducts a free hearing screening; the Indianola Fire Department does a fire safety program; Blank Children’s Hospital sends a representative to do a car safety seat check. Families in need of car seats received them through a grant procured by the Wee Care staff. Simpson College students volunteer their time and First United Methodist church houses this program on site.

The most important accomplishment of **Wee Care** in FY03 was the addition of a 6<sup>th</sup> session as of January 6. There had been an increasing need for services, enough to necessitate another session. There was often a waiting list and Wee Care had been forced to turn families away or ask families to skip sessions in order to allow new families to participate. With the addition of a 6<sup>th</sup> session Wee Care has been able to meet the increased demand – albeit, running at maximum capacity. FY03 Wee Care served 306 unduplicated children – the highest number in the state. (Source: Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Service Evaluation, FY 2001-2002.)

## **“LIFT-off “ - (LIVING INVOLVES FAMILIES TOGETHER)**

### **Washington County Empowerment Area**

#### **Geographic Area Served**

Washington County Empowerment serves the entire Washington County area and all school districts where the central office is located within the Washington County boundaries or by request from an adjoining school district to join this Empowerment Area, subject to Board approval.

#### **Contact for Area**

#### **Vision & Mission**

All individuals within the Washington County Empowerment Area will have a community that values and provides the opportunity to maximize their potential in a safe, healthy, stable and nurturing environment, through partnering and collaborative efforts.

#### **Overview of Community Plan**

The long-term goal of Washington County LIFT-off continues to be the development of a Family Service Center. How this Center looks and functions is not as clear today as it was when the original goal was formulated. The ideal Center would provide a central location for families, with children ages' birth through 5 years, to receive a variety of services. The ideal Center would have three main priorities: 1. Family health; 2. Child development; and 3. Parental support and education. Focusing on these three priorities will assist in achieving the prescribed results as set out by the legislature: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families, and secure and nurturing child care environments. Limited funding for early childhood programs has limited the creation of this Center. However, multiple agencies are participating in the delivery of services at various locations at the present time. Until funds are available for the development of the Family Service Center, various programs at multiple sites will be funded to initiate early childhood services. The positive side of this model is the fact that collaboration and cooperation are necessities in order to avoid duplication of services and provide the ultimate services for families and children throughout the county.

#### **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

##### Mini-grants for day care providers (\$500 maximum per provider)

Assistance is provided to registered or licensed day care providers to improve the quality of day care by purchasing health and safety items.

##### Provider Education

Training sessions provided free of charge to providers through utilization of funding for speakers/food/space.

##### Transportation Assistance

Vouchers available to families with children, age 0-5 years, who have identified transportation as a barrier to child care/preschool and meet financial guidelines

##### Parents as Teachers Home Visitor Program (0-3years)

Home visitor program targeting any parent/caregiver of child 0-3 years to enhance parenting skills and evaluate developmental progress. 1<sup>st</sup> priority given to teen moms, newborns, and 1<sup>st</sup> time moms.

Staffing includes Coordinator and 4 trained PAT staff, including a social worker, a public health nurse, and two early childhood specialists. Funding covers salaries, supplies, fiscal administration, clerical support, and training costs.

##### Healthy Child Care Iowa Position (HCCI)

This part-time RN position is a liaison for day care providers for identification/ implementation of training needs, assistance with health and safety issues, and care coordination services for children who need to access health services. Funding covers salary, incentives for providers, and educational materials.

##### Child Care Resource & Referral Staff Position (CCR&R)

This part-time position provides assistance to day care providers for registration and/or licensing, training needs, and enrollment in the CCR&R program. This staff person works with the HCCI staff person to implement a comprehensive day care liaison program.

##### Preschool Scholarships

Funding is provided for families to send their children to preschool, if they meet income eligibility guidelines up to and including 200% of poverty. Applications required. Committee approval is needed for funding to be issued directly to the preschool.

## Local Indicators

### 1. Family Health

- No specific indicators have been selected for health but immunization rate and insured children are looked at through integration with other programs

### 2. Child Development

- #/% of children entering school with preschool experience
- # of preschool slots available
- # of children accessing subsidized public transportation to preschool/daycare
- Increased number of parents demonstrating appropriate parenting skills as measured by PAT pre/post test

### 3. Parental Support & Education

- #/% of families accessing PAT home visiting program
- # of participants in parent/child play groups
- rate of child abuse/neglect
- # of registered child care providers
- # of licensed child care providers
- # of registered child care slots
- # of licensed child care slots
- # of day care providers participating in HCCI training sessions
- # of providers participating in 5-step HCCI educational program

## Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration, Accomplishments/Results, Successes

- Parents as Teachers links with many existing programs in the county in order to identify parents with children, 0-3 years. Examples of this include prenatal classes at the local hospital, Strengthening Families program, preschools, DHS, alternative high school, public library, Public Health programs (WIC and Maternal Child Health), service organizations, physicians' offices and OB personnel at hospitals. The success of this program is evident as there is a waiting list for families to be enrolled and all PAT staff have full caseloads.
- Healthy Child Care Iowa and Child Care Resource & Referral positions link with 4C's – Johnson County, Oskaloosa CCR&R, DHS, day care providers, PAT home visitor program, preschools, AEA staff, Public Health, Washington Community Y, business & industry, and Chamber of Commerce. New training collaborative efforts are taking place with several of these partners in order to offer providers a wider variety of training options locally to meet requirements.
- Transportation subsidy program has worked closely with the Mini-Bus, Washington County's transportation system, and the Washington Community School District for collaborative transporting of preschoolers.
- Preschool Scholarship subcommittee has worked with existing preschools and representatives from education in all communities to enhance children's access to preschool experiences.
- Washington County Empowerment is experiencing success with existing programs and looking forward to working on additional projects in the future. New collaboratives are being formed as providers, agencies, and citizens work together. A comprehensive countywide needs assessment was conducted this past year, utilizing Iowa State University Extension staff.
- Empowerment is trying to reach out to others in the county – publicity of new grant money and request for proposals elicited two new programs for the next fiscal year being funded. We are presently recruiting a new board member with countywide publicity. The cooperation of current board members has helped with the success of the Empowerment initiatives. Most board members serve on a subcommittee and/or are involved in advisory board capacities.

## Wayne County Empowerment Area

### Counties in Area

Wayne

### Contact for Area

### Mission Statement

To improve the well-being of families with young children and reduce unnecessary barriers of community education, health and human services programs.

### Vision Statement

To promote local collaboration of services to provide a nurturing environment for all young children and their families in our area.

### Overview of Community Plan

### Local Indicators

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

#### **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes**

In October 2002 Board Development Training was held for the Wayne County Empowerment board members. The members discussed the Wayne County Family Survey results which indicated that 41% of parents were dissatisfied with the quality of child care in Wayne County. The group present decided their main goal would be to *improve the quality of child care in Wayne County*. Mini grant funds for providers had already been identified in the budget and would be incorporated in this goal to make purchases for equipment and curriculum. Providers would also be required to complete self-assessments by using the Federal Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) in order to receive the grant funds.

When the training for FDCRS was scheduled, nine providers from Wayne County were invited to participate. Seven providers completed the training and self-assessment. The providers were very honest in completing their assessments. Areas consistently scoring the lowest were active play, sand and water play and cultural awareness. The Wayne County Empowerment Parent Resource Coordinator/Child Care Home Consultant and Child Care Resource and Referral subcommittee reviewed the completed assessments and made

recommendations for improvements to the child care providers. The providers used the recommendations to guide their purchases and make changes. In some instances they added their own money to the grant funds to manage larger projects. Examples of how the grants were used include:

- ◆ install a small bathroom on the ground floor of a two-story home for safety/accessibility
- ◆ purchase totes and shelving for storage and organization
- ◆ purchase plastic totes and utensils for use with sand and water play for indoor/outdoor use
- ◆ purchase ethnic dolls and music for cultural diversity
- ◆ install safety gates for unsecured decks/doorways
- ◆ build decks, patios and fences for outdoor play for both nice and inclement weather
- ◆ increased curricula for reading and creative play
- ◆ purchase larger equipment for physical/motor/developmental play

The child care providers felt the self-assessment was an excellent tool in helping them analyze their overall program. All of the providers who participated made positive changes in improving the quality of child care in their homes. Results of the self-assessments will be used to direct training needs.

In addition, the child care providers will continue to use the Wayne County Empowerment Lending Library located at the Family Resource Center. Empowerment funds will continue to support training, subscriptions for early childhood education curriculum magazines and incentives to providers when attending local in-service/training activities.

Wayne County set a precedence and other counties are now using the Federal Day Care Rating Scale for the child care providers to improve the quality of child care in their county.

## Winnebago County Empowerment Group

### Counties in Area

Winnebago County

### Contact for Area

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### Vision and Mission

It is our mission to enhance joint efforts focused on meeting the needs of families in an attempt to help them become more self-sufficient and to provide a nurturing environment for their young children.

### Overview of Community Plan

The Winnebago County Community Plan was in the original plan submitted prior to our original authorization. Our commitment to that plan has not waivered in the years we have been in existence. Our dedication to families and children

### Local Indicators

The local indicators are shared later in this report and a reflection of our Winnebago County area in which we serve.

### Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding

The services provided with the Winnebago County Empowerment Funding are highlighted in detail as part of Section H below.

Some of the groups the Winnebago County Empowerment Group has partnered with include:

Mercy Hospital's Family Connections	Child Care Resource and Referral
Iowa State University Extension Service	Buffalo Center Development Group
United States Department of Agriculture	Buffalo Center City Council
North Iowa Community School District	North Iowa Community Action
SonShine Preschool	Hanson Life Center
Forest City Christian Preschool	Little Bison Childcare Center

### Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration Efforts; Results/Accomplishments; Successes

The Winnebago County Empowerment Board is a very cohesive team of individuals representing a variety of agencies that serve the citizens of Winnebago County. The diversity of both the governing board and the advisory board has been a real strength as this group has obtained its focus and mission. That focus and a sense of "service to children" has resulted in a commitment by all parties involved to reach consensus and to leave our "agency / organizational agendas at the door."

As a result of the interaction, research, conversation, debate, and planning that went into the writing of our original application, this group has remained focused on the end results and long-term goals. As is all too common in the service community, there are always many more needs than there is financial support or manpower to implement. Even with those limitations this empowerment team has made huge strides and major impacts into the quality of life for our youngest Iowans.

The Winnebago County Empowerment Group has a great deal to be proud of. The Winnebago County Empowerment Group prides itself in tearing down barriers and getting services to families and children.

Winnebago County Empowerment has partnered with Mercy Hospital's Family Connections and visits to pregnant and parenting families to model, training in infant/toddler care, medical screening for all families in need, and track participating families and children's well child checks and immunizations.

Partnering with Child Care Resource and Referral to fund a position that assisted in training childcare providers, center providers, and assisted in the Winnebago County Empowerment Group's efforts to get more in-home providers registered.

Partnered with Iowa State University Extension Service to provide training for in-home and center childcare providers.

Partnered with a community development group, the United States Department of Agriculture, local city council, local school district, and North Iowa Community Action to bring a Head Start/Preschool/Daycare center in one of our communities. The partnership led to the building of a half million dollar building and world-class early childhood center that serves an entire half of our empowerment area.

We continued our strong partnership with empowerment area preschools to provide scholarships and covering transportation expenses in an attempt to give more children a positive preschool experience.

Our collaboration has led to huge victories for children and families with young children.



## Counties in Area

Woodbury County.

## Contact for Area:

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

## Mission

To strengthen, support and empower children and families through access to quality community services.

## Vision

Guided by current research on brain development and supported through meaningful collaboration, our community will provide opportunities for children 0 to 8 to be healthy and ready to learn.

## Overview of Community Plan

All of the programs and services provided under this plan are specifically tied to achieving positive results and outcomes related to our established priorities at the local level, which directly relate to the State Indicators identified by the Iowa Empowerment Board. In this plan we outline a series of programs and services that are based upon a consensus of local early childhood experts within Woodbury County. The Woodbury County Early Childhood plan has been focused on the 0 to 8 population. However, this application specifically focuses on the State of Iowa identified population of 0 to 5.

The development of the Rural and Urban Family Resource and Referral Centers and the In Home Visitation Services is provided participating families with nutrition education. Although the focus of the programs provides children ages 0 to 5, nutrition education is provided to the parents of those children. This education has a positive affect on the children currently in the household and also helps to reduce the number of low birth weight babies born to the parents participating in these programs. Another main focus of these programs is to gain established medical homes for the children ages 0 to 5. If the children and families have established medical homes the rate of immunization by age 2 will greatly increase.

The goal for the Woodbury County School Ready Plan is to have children entering kindergarten ready for school through prior preschool/group experience. This is the focus for the Rural and Urban Family Resource Centers and the public awareness, education and forums conducted by members of the Early Childhood Committee.

## **Woodbury County Early Childhood Indicators**

### **Healthy Children:**

1. # of children with established medical homes
2. # of children with established dental homes
3. # of children with medical insurance
4. # of identified at-risk families accessing the early intervention program

### **Children Ready to Succeed in School:**

1. # of children entering kindergarten who have had pre-school/group experiences
2. # of licensed child care center/preschool slots
3. # of infants served in child care centers or registered child care homes

### **Safe and Nurturing Families:**

1. # of families participating in family support services

### **Secure and Nurturing Childcare Environments:**

1. # of accredited childcare centers
2. # of registered child care homes

## **Summary of Services Provided with Empowerment Funding**

The primary services provided for in the Early Childhood plan have focused on increasing the availability of quality child care. A new process of allocation based on accreditation has been implemented to provide scholarships for licensed child care to children of families that are within the 140 to 185% of poverty. SHIP has also provided funding to increase the quality of child care by partnering with Western Iowa Tech Community College to offer scholarships for professional development of child care workers. In addition, the board has awarded funds for Rural and Urban Resource and Referral Centers. Funding has also been provided to increase the number of infant care openings within the County and extended day care.

## **Showcase of Cooperation/Collaboration**

SHIP has formed many partnerships within the Early Childhood community including Success By 6®, HOPES and Shared Visions. Success By 6® is an early childhood development model created by the Mobilization for America's Children and adopted by local United Ways and Communities across the country. Success By 6® has been engaged to serve as the review committee for all Early Childhood programs and has also agreed to provide the marketing for the Early Childhood Plan. A formal memorandum of agreement has been developed and the new combined collaborative is called Success By 6® and Beyond. Success By 6® and Beyond has initiated involvement in the Imagination Library through the Dollywood Foundation. This project will allow all children born in Sioux City hospitals to receive an age appropriate book a month for 5 years. Success By 6® and Beyond will utilize the Every Child Reads team to serve as the evaluation component of this program. Additional success includes the partnership with the HOPES providers within the County. HOPES will also provide the coordination for the rural and urban resource centers to ensure the elimination of duplication. Success By 6® and Beyond has initiated a process to develop a "Transition to Kindergarten" collaborative consisting of all schools and pre-schools within Woodbury County. This collaborative will develop one transition plan for Woodbury County