



Early Childhood Iowa Monday Musings January 4, 2016 Vol. 3, No. 1

Welcome to the ECI **Monday Musings**. It is a compilation of information, practical advice, training announcements, and/or success stories. **Monday Musings** is intended to disseminate information to Early Childhood Iowa Stakeholders in a timely fashion. (We may on occasion send out a separate email with information if it needs immediate attention or if for a specific audience.)

Please let us know if you have something you would like to contribute or have suggestions or comments at jeffrey.anderson@iowa.gov

Back Issues of Monday Musing are available [here](#).

"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something."

Neil Gaiman



State Information:

Notice of Public Comment Period and Hearing for Iowa's Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan

The Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Adult, Children and Family Services, is seeking input on the state's Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2016 –2018. Federal regulations require the state to notify the public regarding the state's child care assistance program and the efforts to improve the quality of child care in Iowa.

Iowa's draft CCDF State Plan will be available for review and comment from December 18, 2015 – January 7, 2016. **The plan will be available after 1:00 p.m. on December 18th on the DHS website at www.dhs.iowa.gov.** A link to the plan will be posted on the home page under the slide show. Comments will be accepted by email or US postal mail until 4:30 p.m., Thursday, January 7th.

A **public hearing** will also occur on **January 7th from 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held at the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees offices located at 855 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, Iowa. You may also attend the public hearing via webinar by registering at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6063536512298101249>. Comment provided in person or via webinar on that day must also be submitted in written form. Oral comment is limited to 5 minutes per person.

Comments must be submitted either by email to kshacke@dhs.state.ia.us or in writing to Kim Shackelford, Iowa Dept. of Human Services, Division of ACFS-Child Care Bureau, Hoover State Office Bldg., 5th Floor, 1305 E Walnut, Des Moines, IA 50319-0114.

The Early Childhood Day on the Hill event is coming!

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. Day on the Hill will be held on **Tuesday, February 23, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** in the Capitol rotunda. The focus of this year's event will be on the importance of high quality child care. Please consider sending an invitation to your state legislators now!

The Early Childhood Day on the Hill event is being held in lieu of an ECI Stakeholder Alliance meeting.

Don't know who your legislators are? Find out by visiting <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators>. Get to know your legislators by signing up for newsletters, attending community forums and simply reaching out to them. They want to hear from you! Don't wait until you get to the Capitol. Begin building a relationship today!

Medicaid Modernization

IA Health Link Launch Date Update: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued its decision on the implementation of the IA Health Link managed care program. The program will now begin on March 1, 2016, instead of January 1, 2016.

In the meantime, Medicaid members can continue to see their current providers. **Letters** are being mailed by December 24, 2015, to all members to update them on this extension. Letters will begin arriving to members within the next week. Members will be able to choose their health plan until February 17, 2016, for coverage beginning March 1, 2016. Members will have until May 18, 2016 to make a change for any reason, and then for "good cause" reasons after that.

Managed Care Organizations: DHS initially selected four managed care organizations (MCOs) to administer the IA Health Link Program. On December 18, 2015, the Notice of Intent to Award was reversed for WellCare following an appeals process. While further litigation may continue, Iowa Medicaid will tentatively reassign members who were initially assigned to, or who chose WellCare during the enrollment process. The new tentative assignments will be sent in January.

Providers are encouraged to continue working with the MCOs and complete contracts and credentialing requirements. All currently enrolled providers can continue to see Medicaid members and receive current reimbursement through Iowa Medicaid.

For more information on IA Health Link Transition Updates see [Informational Letter 1594-MC](#).

Call Center Updates: Scripts for call centers are being updated to address the new implementation date and explain how the WellCare decision impacts members. Once these scripts are approved they will be shared with our partner MCOs to guarantee Iowa Medicaid is communicating changes to members in a consistent and timely manner.

Online Materials: The communications team at Iowa Medicaid is working quickly to ensure our online materials are up-to-date. The IA Health Link [brochure](#), [flyer](#) and [poster](#) now reflect the March 1, 2016 implementation date. More detailed materials are being updated to reflect the new implementation date as well as the change in MCO choice options.

Information on Medicaid Modernization can be found on the dedicated web page at:
<http://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/about/initiatives/MedicaidModernization>.

Federal Information:

CCDF FY 2016-2018 Final Plan Preprint for States and Territories and Program Instruction

Dear Colleagues:

I'm pleased to announce that the CCDF FY 2016–2018 Final Plan Preprint for States and Territories and the accompanying Program Instruction have been posted on the Office of Child Care (OCC) Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ccdf-reauthorization>. The Program Instruction (CDDF-PI-2015-09) provides guidance on the Plan submission, implementation plans, as well as the criteria and process for requesting temporary waiver extensions for requirements that are not met at the time of the Plan submission. States and Territories will use this Plan Preprint, approved by the Office of Management and Budget, to submit their Plans to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) via the e-submission site on or before March 1, 2016.

On behalf of OCC, I want to thank all our commenters for your thoughtful consideration of the Plan Preprint. We believe that the CCDF FY 2016–2018 Final Plan Preprint will serve as an important blueprint for implementing our shared commitment to improving the number of high-quality choices available to low-income families through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program.

ACF has compiled technical assistance resources on reauthorization topics and has cross-walked those topics with major CCDF Plan sections. The collection of resources can be found at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-reauthorization>. As additional resources become available, they will be posted to that Web site as well.

Thank you for all you do for children and families.

Rachel Schumacher
Director, Office of Child Care



Head Start and Early Head Start Economic Mobility Week

Building Foundations for Economic Mobility

Webinar Series and Virtual Resource Fair

Feb. 22 - 25, 2016

[Register Online Now!](#)

Supporting families' financial security and economic well-being is not new to Head Start. Let's recommit to this important part of our family partnership work. Please join the Office of Head Start (OHS), national experts, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs as we highlight successes and examine the challenges in supporting family financial stability and employment, training and education, and career opportunities.

Schedule of Events

Monday, Feb. 22: A Message from OHS Director Dr. Blanca Enriquez

Tuesday-Thursday, Feb. 23-25: Building Foundations for Economic Mobility Webinar Series

Friday, Feb. 26: Virtual Resource Fair and Networking

Other Information:

Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Conference Update

The [2016 Child Abuse Prevention Conference](#) will take place April 25-27 in downtown Des Moines. Hotel rooms at a discounted rate are now available to reserve with the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. Registration will be launched by late January.

School Mobility: Implications for Children's Development

More than one-fifth of children in the United States are living in [poverty](#). Children growing up in poverty face numerous adversities that can negatively affect their learning and development, starting at a very early age. For example, these children are less likely to have access to books and to hear rich vocabulary; and are more likely to be exposed to violence in their neighborhoods, attend low-quality, under-resourced schools, have stressed parents, live in crowded and/or noisy homes, and have unstable home environments. All of these stressful life experiences can compromise children's learning, as well as their cognitive and social-emotional development.

Moving from school to school can adversely affect child outcomes. NIEER researcher Allison Friedman-Krauss examines the issue in NIEER's latest blog [post](#).

Children with Disabilities Benefit from Classroom Inclusion

A study of 670 preschool-aged children enrolled in 83 early childhood special education classrooms in Ohio finds that the secret to boosting the language skills of preschoolers with disabilities may be to put them in classrooms with typically developing peers. Researchers found that the average language skills of a child's classmates in the fall significantly predicted the child's language skills in the spring – especially for children with disabilities. The results support inclusion policies in schools that aim to have students with disabilities in the same classrooms alongside their typically developing peers. ([The Ohio State University](#))

Fostering Early Brain Development

New videos for your organization

These new short videos from Child Trends offer powerful messages for parents and providers working with young children. They feature Dr. Dana Suskind summarizing research on topics such as why the first three years of life are so important, what we know about early brain development, how to help low-income parents, and more. We'd be happy to have you post them on your website. Just send us a note at staff@childtrends.org.

Watch them [here](#).

Preschoolers' Math Skills Improve with PBS KIDS Content & Family Engagement

New research demonstrates that PBS KIDS content helps narrow the math achievement gap for children from low-income families and better prepares them for kindergarten. WestEd, a national nonprofit research, development, and service agency, released the findings of a study that measured the impact of PBS KIDS content and family involvement on preschool children's math learning. Study findings suggest that PBS KIDS resources, coupled with family engagement, can help narrow the math achievement gap for children from low-income families and better prepare them for kindergarten. (WestEd) [Learn More here](#)

For more information about Early Childhood Iowa, visit our website:

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

To join the ECI Stakeholders, please complete the commitment survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FSXR5F2>

2016 ECI Meeting Calendar:

ECI State Board

10:00 – 1:00

January 8

April 1

June 3

September 9

November 4

June 2 (9:00 AM – Noon)

August 4 (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

October 6 (9:00 AM – Noon)

November 3 (9:00 AM – Noon)

Early Childhood Iowa Day on the Hill

February 23, 2016

ECI Stakeholders Alliance

3 – 4 Hour meetings

February 23 (TBD)

May 10 (PM)

September 13 (AM)

December 13 (PM)

ECI Area Directors

April 6 All day

(June will be regional meetings)

September 13 (afternoon)

December 7 All day

ECI State Dept. Directors

8:30 – 10:30

May 6

October 7

ECI Steering Committee

Time Varies

January 7 (9:00 AM – Noon)

March 3 (9:00 – 4:00 PM)

April 7 (9:00 AM – Noon)