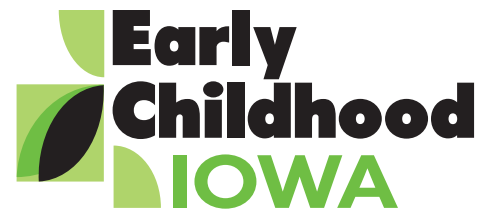


# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Full report can be found at [earlychildhood.iowa.gov](http://earlychildhood.iowa.gov)





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**OUR VISION:**

**Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.**

“Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are formed, his mind developed. To him we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today.” This charge from Chilean Poet Gabriela Mistral is timeless but its relevance in the COVID-19 era could not be more timely.

The Early Childhood (ECI) State Board, as well as our 38 area boards, are working collaboratively with national, state, and local agencies to assure that our prenatal through 5-year-old population have the resources they need to become happy, healthy and engaged citizens of the 21st Century.

Our Iowa early learning centers and homes are experiencing unprecedented pressures from a trifecta of parents experiencing unemployment and unable to pay the costs for child care, low attendance from parents concerned about sending their children to group settings, and the increased costs of COVID-19 related personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies. Additionally, the child care workforce has continued to struggle with earning poverty-level wages which makes recruitment and retention across the child care workforce an on-going dilemma.

There were national and state alarms being sounded prior to the pandemic about the lack of access to affordable, quality child care. In the past 10 years, Iowa has lost 46% of its registered home-based family child care slots/spaces. The viability of child care businesses to survive the pandemic depends on many variables such as the length of the current demands of COVID-19, continued financial supports for child care businesses, and whether or not legislation is passed to support child care businesses to address systemic issues with the current child care system in the U.S.

Last legislative session the Iowa House passed 5 bills on a single day in an effort to confront the chronic shortage of child care...this was prior to the pandemic shut down of the session. We thank you and ask for your continued vigilance in the upcoming session as our challenges have not abated.

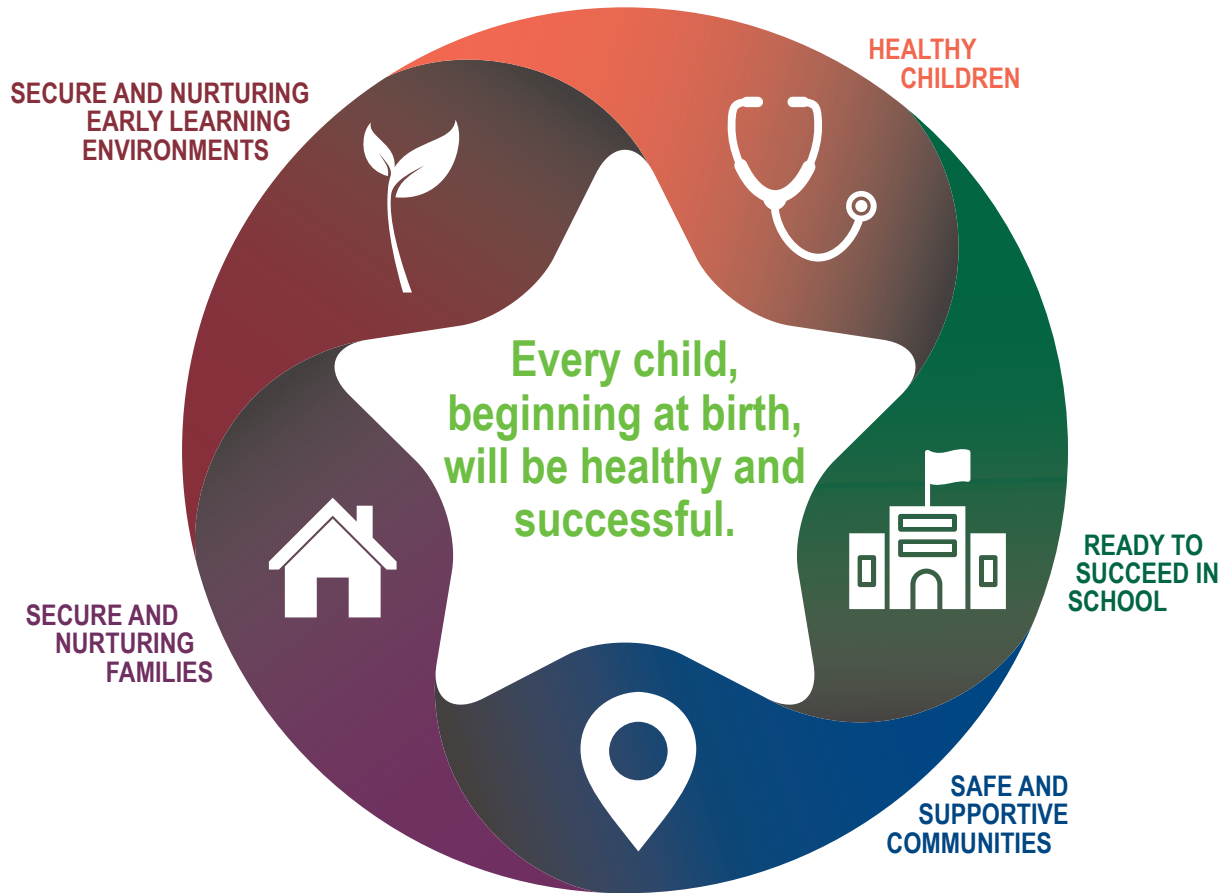
We are continuing to partner with Iowa State University in building Iowa’s Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) which has been funded by grant and state agency investments based on public and private interests. Titled I2D2, this collaborative effort is bringing together data that historically existed in siloed administrative systems. Integrating this data into one system allows for executive decision-making that cuts across relevant data banks of health, education and child welfare. The efficiencies created by I2D2 will result in more informed decisions at lower expenditure of resources statewide.

As you review this report, I hope you can see the conscientious efforts made by the ECI Community and our collaborators to assure that our prenatal through age 5 population receive the attention they deserve. “Many things we need can wait...the child cannot.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Clewell".

Rich Clewell, ECI State Board Chair

# OUR VISION FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN



## EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA IS IOWA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

"Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful." Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) was recognized by Iowans through initial legislation in 1998 to create a partnership between communities and state government with an emphasis to improve the well-being of young children and their families. For twenty-two years and counting, Iowa has strengthened these partnerships so that every community in Iowa will develop the capacity and commitment for using local, informed decision-making to achieve desired results for Iowans.

### Iowa's early childhood system collaborates to ensure children are HEALTHY

**11,495** children, ages one up through age five, received ECI funded oral health education, screenings, referrals for further dental treatment as needed, and fluoride varnish preventative care



**"The ECI Area Board (Partnership 4 Families) allows our I-Smile program to provide oral health education, dental screenings, dental fluoride varnish, and dental referrals to all of our area preschool students. Poor oral health can affect a child's quality of life and ability to be successful in school. Cavities are preventable and we are thankful that our ECI program realizes this and allows us the opportunity to aid in the prevention of cavities and improve the oral health of young children in our community."**

Amy Hunziker, RDH, I-Smile Oral Health Coordinator, New Opportunities, INC

\* For a full data report to see how Iowa is doing, check out the Statewide Indicators report: <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/document/eci-2020-annual-report>

## Iowa's early childhood system extended children's opportunity to be **READY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**

**1,856** children, ages three through age five, received an ECI funded preschool scholarship so these children could access full-day, quality early learning



**586** children received safe and reliable transportation to their early learning program

## Iowa's early childhood system prompts and funds **SECURE AND NURTURING EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

**\$2,545,830** invested to expand resources for child care businesses by funding gaps to increase accessible technical assistance, professional development for the workforce, coaching and mentoring, regular communication and direct pandemic response to child care centers and registered child development homes.



Almost **100** child care business providers received on-going technical assistance to work towards licensure or registration via the Business Investment Program

WAGE\$ @ IOWA is a salary supplement program offered by Iowa AEYC. As with T.E.A.C.H. IOWA, WAGE\$ is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association. WAGE\$ offers salary supplements (also called stipends) to the early care and education workforce, based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to their program.

\$357,036.86 invested locally  
\$76,171 federal Preschool Development Grant  
\$55,883.50 statewide professional development  
**Total Investment: \$489,091.36**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood @ IOWA (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) is a comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce access to educational opportunities and is helping establish a well-qualified, fairly compensated and stable workforce for our children.

\$99,967 invested locally  
\$125,350 federal Preschool Development Grant  
\$244,650 statewide professional development  
**Total investment: \$381,476.95**

## Iowa's early childhood system supports **SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES**

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) exists so that every community in Iowa will develop the capacity and commitment for using local, informed decision making to achieve desired results for Iowa's young children and their families.



**238,569+** children ages birth through age five need every community's dedication to their first 2,000 days (2019, Woods and Poole Population Estimate)

**\$443,200** invested to fill gaps in establishing coordinated training opportunities for child care providers in order to enhance and improve the quality of care and education

**"By having ECI support, the networking between programs has grown immensely. The local area board does a great job communicating pertinent information and making us all aware of each other and what we offer to the community. ECI pulls us all together quarterly, shares info, and gives us an opportunity to talk about our programs with each other. The programs are much more likely to refer to each other and communicate about potential support because of this effort."**

Lynda Loy, CART, an ECI program provider

## Iowa's early childhood system partners to support **SECURE AND NURTURING FAMILIES**

Statewide family support services provided parent education, secure and nurturing attachment knowledge, and resource connections for families most in need of extended supportive connections.



**11,061** children, prenatal through age five, and 8,664 families received family support services thanks to multiple state and federal funding sources

Of these families, **4.2%** were teen mothers at the time of enrollment

**65.9%** of families served had an income of 125% of the Federal Poverty Level or lower



# TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS, EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA IS MADE UP OF THREE PARTS:

## 1 STATE LEADERSHIP BOARD

**PURPOSE:** To promote the vision for a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system. The ECI State Board is committed to the utilization of the strategic plan to promote strategies for improving outcomes for young children and their families.

Fifteen citizens from across the state; the Iowa Departments of Education, Human Services, Public Health, Human Rights, Workforce Development, and Iowa Economic Development Authority; and four legislators serve on the ECI State Board; with coordination by Department of Management.

**“We were able to divert \$14,994 of funds dedicated to child care that went unspent due to COVID and leverage an additional \$8,000 from local governments to pay \$16,994 in hazard bonuses to child care workers that continued showing up to work during the shutdown.”**

Local ECI Area Board

### FY20 Accomplishments At-a-Glance

- Approved our [“We are ECI” 2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#) (Approved on 9/6/2019)
- Adopted the [ECI Equity Guiding Principles](#) to provide an approach in constructing our early childhood systems; including guidelines such as policy making, system financing, increasing quality, ensuring services are accessible to all children, and that Iowa has a diverse and effective early childhood workforce. (Approved on 6/5/2020)
- Adopted the [ECI Style Guide](#) to move toward a cohesive look when sharing about the system and/or activities. (Approved on 1/22/2020)
- Approved guidance, detailed in Tool FF, to support the competency assessment process and requirements for family support professionals. (Approved on 6/5/2020)
- In conversations with the Governor’s Office, the ECI State Board was able to approve a FY20 policy change to adjust the 20% carry-forward allowance to 35% to assist ECI Area boards with a possible break and change in services because of the public health pandemic. Local ECI Area Boards have been able to utilize their additional carry-forward dollars to respond to on-going emergency response. (Approved on 4/3/2020)
  - 8 local ECI Area Boards utilized an average of 28% carry-forward in their School-Ready funds
  - 9 local ECI Area Boards utilized an average of 27% carry-forward in their Early Childhood funds

## STATE ADVISORY STRUCTURE

**PURPOSE:** To provide advice and support to the state board, the Governor, general assembly, and other public and private policy bodies to coordinate state activities.

ECI Stakeholders Alliance branches into several component groups and subgroups focused on a range of expertise. Our stakeholders include public and private representatives across the early childhood system focused on early learning; health and mental health; and family support.

The ECI State Board's Public Private Partnership committee is a long-term collaboration between the public and private sectors to promote efforts that will build awareness to communities, businesses and families of the importance of early childhood development. The partnership creates awareness of the critical role child care plays in retaining reliable productive employees along with a future skilled workforce. To that end, three priorities have been identified to promote system-level, statewide investment opportunities:

1. Create a Private Public Partnership Fund
2. Expand T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood @ IOWA and Child Care WAGE\$ @ IOWA
3. Create a Multi-Pronged Approach to Support Child Care Through Tax Credits

### FY20 Accomplishments At-a-Glance

- Active Component Groups Implementing the Strategic Plan
  - 88 (unduplicated) actively engaged public and private stakeholders collaborating across six component groups and seven subgroups to move towards implementing our strategic plan on behalf of Iowa's early childhood system
- 24 public and private stakeholders engaged in a systems thinking cohort to learn about and utilize strategies and tools for engaging in collaborative work focused on implementing strategic plan goals
- An average of 70 family support professionals and stakeholders virtually participated in on-going, monthly virtual connections across the early childhood system to engage in professional development, coaching tips, and supports; known as Lunch and Learns.
- An average of 109 family support professionals and stakeholders participated in Snack and Shares which were added as a way for virtual connections during the public health pandemic.

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**“Our local cross sector relationships and networking allows us to be nimble and creative in sharing resources during a crisis. Due to those local relationships, the ECI Board staff was able to quickly obtain 115 gallons of hand sanitizer from SIRE (Southwest Iowa Renewable Energy) and personally deliver to early childhood programs and partners in a 7 county area. Our childcare partners shared their gratitude in receiving needed supplies quicker and at a higher quantity than through state department channels.”**

Patricia Russmann, ECI Area Director

## LOCAL STRUCTURE

**PURPOSE:** To enable local citizens to lead efforts in their area as designated by the State Board, and to administer grant funding to programs and services catered to young children.

There are 38 Early Childhood Iowa area boards statewide representing all 99 counties. Each area has a citizen-led board to support activities to promote collaboration and develop systems in the community for young children and their families.

In their role, ECI area boards develop a comprehensive community plan that includes data gathered through various assessment processes. This information assists the community in planning, funding, professional development and overall support of early childhood programming in the community.

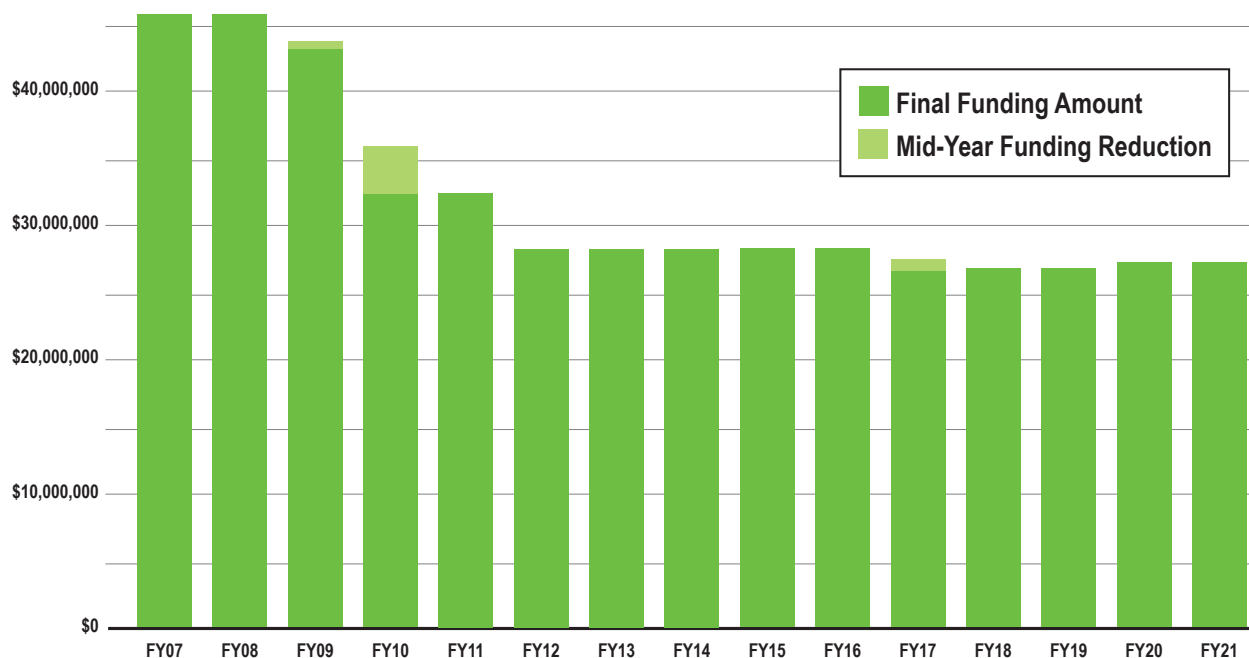
### FY20 Accomplishments At-a-Glance

- \$12,672,466 local and state ECI dollars invested to provide statewide promising practice and/or evidence-based home visiting models that provide comprehensive child and family services for pregnant/postpartum women, children, and their families. Health and parenting education, screenings and referrals support children to reach their full potential.
- 7 local boards intentionally investing in public awareness and early childhood system development with an estimated 97,174 local stakeholders engaged in these outreach activities

# EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA'S ACHIEVEMENTS



## ECI FUNDING HISTORY





# ECI DATA HIGHLIGHT

## HEALTHY CHILD CARE IOWA

# CHILD CARE NURSE CONSULTANT PROGRAM



For the past 20 years, the Iowa Department of Public Health, Title V Maternal Health and Child & Adolescent Health program has partnered with Iowa Department of Human Services and Early Childhood Iowa to support Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI) and the Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) Program. Child Care Nurse Consultation is an evidence-based practice that positively impacts child health outcomes and the quality of child care programs. Research indicates that child care health (nurse) consultants support healthy and safe early care and education (ECE) settings and protect and promote the healthy growth and development of children and their families.<sup>1</sup> Local CCNCs work with ECE providers in all 99 counties providing health consultation; training; technical assistance - including mitigation practices for the prevention of communicable disease spread; and care planning for children with special health needs. There is no dedicated

or continuous funding for CCNC services. They have been primarily funded by ECI area boards and a small percentage of other funds including United Way, IDPH child health funding, DHS (gap filling) and local community grants. Lack of funding has resulted in limited or at times no local CCNC services to support child care programs and the families they serve.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCNCs have provided virtual visits, technical assistance, and training to ECE programs. Local CCNCs are seen as an important resource and nationally child care health consultation has been indicated as a COVID-19 strategy for protecting the physical well-being of child care providers and children.<sup>2</sup> The partnership between local and state DHS and HCCI Child Care Nurse Consultants have proved critical for supporting the child care system, keeping children and staff healthy, and child care open throughout the pandemic.

Nationally, there has been an increase in the number of children with chronic health conditions. In 2018 there were 5.5 million children with asthma (compared to 4.3 million in 2015)<sup>3</sup>, the number of children with allergies including life threatening food allergies saw a marked increase during that same time period as well as increases of both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes making it a growing clinical and public health concern. Asthma, allergies, seizures and diabetes are common conditions where the CCNC is asked to help with consultation, care planning, medication instruction, and training. CCNCs train child care providers so that they gain the confidence and skills to provide the care children need to keep them healthy, decrease missed days, and help to prevent absenteeism for working families. CCNCs help ensure children with special health needs have equitable access to quality child care.

### CHILD CARE NURSE CONSULTANT ECI PERFORMANCE MEASURE DATA

**Data reflects all funding sources to support Child Care Nurse Consultation: ECI Area funding, child health, DHS and any other local funding.**

	2018	2019	2020
Child care programs participating with a CCNC	1558	1563	1759
Percentage improvement in health and safety	94%	90%	95%
Percentage of programs statewide participating with CCNCs	35%	37%	42%
Child care visits completed	4047	4322	3082
Technical assistance provided	8147	6227	9113
Children with special health needs identified	1064	698	680
Percentage with a care plan in place	83%	92%	91%
Total # of trainings by CCNCs	226	217	128*
Total providers trained	2252	2680	1483
ECI Funding	\$1,392,500	\$1,436,641	\$1,562,129
Other Funding	\$240,865	\$235,836	\$251,996
Cost per program	\$1,048	\$1,071	\$1,031

\*FTF and virtual; 45 classes cancelled due to COVID-19 or low enrollment.

1 Alkon, A., J. Bemzweig, K. To, M. Wolff, J. F. Mackie. (2009). Child care health consultation improves health and safety policies and practices. *Academic Pediatrics* 9:366-70.

2 Rosanbalm, K., Baker, E. (2020). Strategies to Support the Well-Being of Essential Child Care Staff and Young Children During COVID-19. *Duke Center for Child and Family Policy Brief*. April 2020

3 CDC Asthma data tables [https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/NHIS/SHS/2018\\_SHS\\_Table\\_C-1.pdf](https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/NHIS/SHS/2018_SHS_Table_C-1.pdf) and <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/brfss/2015/child/tableC1.htm>



# IMPLEMENTING IOWA'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022



## GOAL 1 | Promote a coordinated infrastructure to advance the early childhood system.

### COMPONENT GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Results Accountability component group initiated an action plan to identify the different layers of the system and different ways to provide data to inform decision-making. To achieve this, it will be important to establish data literacy opportunities for a variety of data comforts, familiarity, and/or experience with understanding and utilizing data.

Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (I2D2) was established to inform data-based decision-making and has continued to grow. We believe that by strategically integrating people and data from across service systems we can address Iowa's most pressing problems and make more effective and efficient decisions on behalf of Iowa children and families.

- I2D2 Vision: Our system of early childhood policies and programs across the state will be informed by rigorous analysis of timely, comprehensive, and integrated data from health, human services, and education systems. Implications of policy and program analysis will be considered in collaboration to direct services and resource allocation.

**“ECI exemplifies community partnership in our community by supporting our families who qualify while subsidizing their monthly tuition assistance. A lot of our families would not be able to send their children to our preschool program because of the expense. These parents do realize the importance of having their child enrolled at preschool. They understand that this is an educational opportunity being able to teach academics and socially interacting with peers. They also want their child to experience this amazing opportunity, since it’s very beneficial and helpful for their child.”**

Hope Hall, East Union Early Childhood Learning Center

## GOAL 2 | Build public will for investing in young children and families.

### COMPONENT GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Public Engagement component group focused on public awareness conversations which resulted in the ECI State Board's approval of the ECI Style Guide. Applying the style guide features will be seen in the new resource hub which will be established via a FY21 release of ECI's new website. (Strategies 2.1 and 2.2)

The Family Engagement group and the ECI Equity Advisory group, subgroups of the Governance component group, partnered to discuss an action plan to develop future state-level strategies for expanding family voice to inform strategic plan implementation. (Strategies 2.2 and 2.3)

**“During a time of such uncertainty and isolation, there are challenges but also opportunities for growth. The board and our community partners have adapted and utilized technology to maintain contact, share important information and valuable resources for families with children, and continue the commitment to provide services to families in the best way possible. The board, our community partners, and service providers have been a constant for our families with young children, at a time when they have needed it most.”**

Shawna Lebeck, ECI Area Director



## GOAL 3

Transform the early childhood workforce through formal education, improved professionalization, increased skills and competence, and new approaches to implementing best practices.

### COMPONENT GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS:

The early childhood's professional development system began transforming in-person curriculum and training to on-line learning development and delivery to expand learning opportunities for the workforce statewide.

The Professional Development component group initiated a public and private workgroup of eleven early childhood workforce professionals to create coaching competencies. Competencies support common language for expectations to meet regardless of the model implemented.

**“Elizabeth Stanek has taken the lead on child care issues in our community. She has brought groups and individuals together in regard to the issue. Her board has been instrumental in the process by providing vision and support for a child care initiative for Fort Dodge and Webster County. We would not be where we are today without Linking Families and Communities.”**

Dawn Larson, City of Fort Dodge, Economic Development Specialist.



## GOAL 4

Ensure that young children and families receive the services they need when they need them.

### COMPONENT GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Resources & Funding component group was re-initiated and will begin working towards updating an early childhood system fiscal scan. A benefit for this scan will be to identify where investments are being made, impact, and where future investments and priorities are needed; utilizing data to inform planning and recommendations.

A Service Coordinator Network connection was made between Early ACCESS Coordinators and child care providers to begin to bridge the gap between partners in the system.

**“The rapid implementation of our virtual preschool scholarship policy incentivized 9 of our 12 participating programs to continue serving children through the end of the traditional school year.”**

Local ECI Area Board



## GOAL 5

Improve the quality of early childhood services for young children and their families across early care and education; health, mental health, and nutrition; and family support services.

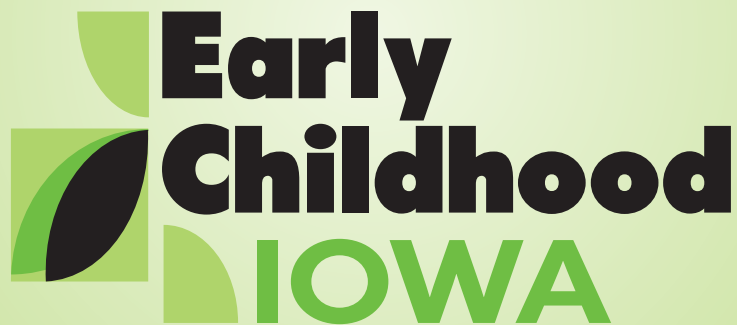
### COMPONENT GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Professional Development component group updated the “How to Measure Quality Professional Development?” document, which guides system partners when developing and updating training materials for the early childhood workforce.

The ECI Equity Guiding Principles were adopted by the ECI State Board and will inform future efforts in intentionally informing planning and actions with an equity lens and grow the use of disaggregated data.

**“Tammy Wetjen-Kesterson, our ECI Director for Jefferson County has been an imperative partner on our collaborative child care initiative in Jefferson County. The partnership with ECI and local economic development has been the ideal match to expand child care spaces, improve quality, and address affordability. ECI has provided the foundational funding at the most crucial points in our initiative including funding the Child Care Market analysis, and the innovative child care development and expansion solutions. Our partnership and the child care expansion results have received national recognition. Without ECI, Jefferson County wouldn't be where it is today”**

Joshua Laraby, Executive Director for Fairfield Economic Development Association.



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