

Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

Questions/Comments:
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11th Annual Iowa Early Care, Health & Education Congress

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision:

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

The 11th Annual Congress, adopted a new name, the Annual Iowa Early Care, Health & Education Congress, to reflect the exciting work that is happening across the state to develop a comprehensive system of supports and services to young children and their families.

The focus this year was on how early childhood supports and services contribute to the economic growth of the state. Key note speakers Joan Lombardi, Mildred Warner and Rob Gruenwald informed and challenged the participants to not wait a minute longer to make a case for investing in early childhood development to reap exceptional returns in the future.

Governor Vilsack was the opening key note speaker to the Congress. In his address, Governor Vilsack noted that, "Iowa needs to invest more money in early



childhood education and child-care programs, social service and child welfare." Specifically, to keep Iowa a good place to raise children, goals need to be set to find resources for food stamp outreach, expanding dental services and EPSDT, increasing funding for Community empowerment, expanding opportunities for quality preschool experiences, and expanding child care training through meaningful incentives for completing training.

Footsteps to Iowa's Future Early Care, Health & Education Day on the Hill Feb. 3 & 4, 2004

Make plans now to attend the 2004 Day on the Hill activities to continue the discussion of importance and economic impact of investing in early childhood development with our legislators.

Dr. Abby Thorman, Director of the Metropolitan Council on Child Care at Mid-American Regional Council, will speak on the 3rd about "Putting the Pieces Together for Early Learning: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward."

On February 4, the Exhibit Fair will be held in the Capitol.

Also, on February 4, advocates will descend on the Capitol to meet with legislators.

For more information, contact Marla Sheffler at msheffler@iowachildnetwork.org.

Administrative Update – October-December 2003



(Ida County Health Fair)

Upcoming Events

Iowa Empowerment Board

2004 Schedule

January 9, 2004
 March 5, 2004
 May 7, 2004
 July 9, 2004
 September 10, 2004

Day on the Hill

February 3 & 4, 2004
 Hotel Fort Des Moines
 State Capitol

Empowerment Contacts/Coordinator

2004 Schedule
 February 18, 2004
 May 19, 2004
 September 15, 2004

October Board Meeting and Related Activities

The Iowa Empowerment Board met on Friday, October 3. Board members made a commitment to be stronger advocates for young children and their families. Since the October meeting, several board members attended local Redesignation visits and more of them have attended local board meetings.

Update on the Iowa Department of Public Health Grant Opportunity

Iowa, through the Department of Public Health Bureau of Family Health applied for and received a State Maternal and Child Healthy Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant. IDPH will partner with Community Empowerment to develop the single comprehensive plan for Iowa's early childhood system.

Smart Start Technical Assistance Grant Final Evaluation

On December 4, the Smart Start Technical Assistance evaluation team met with the core stakeholders group to gather input on processes and results of the assistance during the grant period, which began in January of 2002. The evaluation of Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center focused on two main questions:

- Throughout the process of providing technical assistance, how can efforts be improved?
- What is the impact or result of the various types of technical assistance?

Early Care, Health and Education System Building Activities

- Smart Start Final Evaluation - December 2
- Quality Services and Programs (Core Stakeholder subgroup) – November 25
- Core Stakeholders Meeting – December 2
- Iowa Empowerment Board Meeting – October 3
- Iowa Learns Council - October 17
- Smart Start ITAG Meeting - October 28-29
- Iowa Learns Council planning - November 17
- Systems Financing Project Partners Meeting - October 29, December 9
- Systems Financing Project Oversight Committee – November 6
- Early Care, Health and Education Congress - November 18 - 19
- Early Childhood Research Summit - November 18
- Iowa Learns Council, Team 1 - December 3

Site Visits/Technical Assistance Activities

- Redesignation- Tama, Benton, Poweshiek, Iowa, & Cedar - October 7-8
- Redesignation-Winnebago, Cerro Gordo/Hancock/Worth, & Floyd/Mitchell/Chickasaw - October 8
- Redesignation - Jefferson/Keokuk, Mahaska/Wapello, Henry, Washington, & Des Moines/Louisa - October 15-16
- Woodbury Board Meeting - October 17
- Redesignation - Dallas, Madison, Monroe, Jasper, & Wayne -October 21-22
- Redesignation - Cherokee/Lyon/Plymouth/Sioux, Ida, Harrison/Monona/Shelby - October 22
- Buchanan/Delaware/Franklin Forum - October 23
- Home Visitor Training – November 6
- Madison County Board Meeting - November 11
- Scott County Home Visitation Meeting - November 13
- Cedar County – Board Development – December 4
- Adair, Boone & Guthrie Boundary discussion - December 11
- Lakes Area Results Accountability Training – December 19

**Administrative
Update –
October-
December 2003
cont.**

Linkages/Outreach Activities

- Promise Jobs Coordinators - October 2
 - Child Care Advisory Council Quality Workgroup - October 2
 - MCH Fall Seminar - October 2-3
 - Polk County Newborn Case Management - October 10
 - IAIEYC Pre-conference - October 9
 - National Community Action Academy - October 13-16
 - Iowa's Child Protection Council - October 14
 - Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter Outcomes Training - October 14
 - Performance Measures Group - October 17
 - Iowa Community Action Agency Conference – October 20-22
 - Milbank Foundation – Information Sharing – October 20
 - Congress Planning Preparation – October 23, November 13
 - TEACH Advisory - October 28
 - AGA Governance Advisory Team - October 28
 - Early Learning Standards Exec Team - October 29, December 4
 - Child Care Advisory Council - October 30, December 11
 - Early Childhood Assessment Group - October 31
 - OSEP/NECTAT Conference - November 2-5
 - MCH Data Team - November 4
 - Head Start Collaboration Office - November 5
 - Home Visitation Workshop - November 6
 - Communities of Promise – November 7, 21
 - State Board of Health – November 12
 - Spring Health Conference Planning – October 16, November 13
 - Head Start Parent Leadership Conference – Empowerment Presentation – Nov 15
 - ICHE Congress - November 18-19
 - ICHE Research Summit - November 18
 - Early Access Council - November 21
 - ECCS Grant Meeting - December 1-3
 - MCHB Meeting - December 9
 - Youth Development Grant Application Review – December 12-31
 - Early Learning Standards Stakeholders - December 17
 - Post Congress Meeting - December 18
-

21 Community Empowerment Areas Seek Redesignation for Another Three Years

The last 21 areas to be designated as Community Empowerment Areas completed the re-designation process to receive Early Childhood and School Ready funds for the next three years. Each local board completed a self-evaluation that focused on their organizational structure and functions, their community plan, how they are able to use data to mark progress toward achieving results, and the status of local collaboration. Members of the state technical assistance team met with representatives from each area to review their findings and offered ideas and technical assistance to address opportunities for continuous improvement. The state team will present their finding to the state Iowa Empowerment Board on January 9, 2004.

Areas applying were:

- Benton County
- Cedar County
- Cerro Gordo, Hancock & Worth Counties
- Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth & Sioux Counties
- Chickasaw, Floyd & Mitchell Counties
- Dallas County
- Des Moines and Louisa Counties
- Harrison, Monona & Shelby Counties
- Henry County
- Ida County
- Iowa County
- Jasper County
- Jefferson & Keokuk Counties
- Madison County
- Marion County
- Mahaska & Wapello Counties
- Poweshiek County
- Tama County
- Washington County
- Wayne County
- Winnebago County

Iowa Learns Council has First Meeting

On October 24, 2003 the 38 members appointed by the Governor to the Iowa Learns Council held its first meeting.

Governor Vilsack shared the timing is right for this group and their charge. He emphasized the division into the 3 groups to address transition issues and proactively work on every step of the way. During these challenging economic times, it comes down to education and the quality of the systems we have in place. Additional resources are necessary to keep the quality of services we have become accustomed to having. When the economy turns around, we want to make sure we have a plan to that will be as effective as it can be where children and youth transition from early childhood to K -12, to Post Secondary education and to the workforce.

Two aggressive goals have been set:

- 90% of our young children have a quality early childhood experience. We need to decide what that is. How many children have the access to experience that quality care? Are youngsters inspired and encouraged to graduate and go on to higher education.
- 90% of children access 2 years of education past high school experience. What needs to be done to reach that goal? Not only think of today, but in 5-10 years. Iowa must aggressively discuss and deal with diversity issues and how they affect these goals.

This group must have that discussion because of the changing dynamics of Iowa. Because of the size of this council, and extent of its charge, the need for the 3 smaller groups/teams was determined to be the most efficient way to set the course for the transitions in a seamless system.

- Early learning to K-12
- K-12 to Post Secondary
- Post Secondary to Workforce

**Early Childhood
to K -12**

Team Members

John Calhoun (Chair)

Sioux City

Christopher Carman,

Cedar Rapids

Terri Christofferson,

Toddville

Gwen Countryman,

Dubuque

Mark C. Draper,

Council Bluffs

Kathryn Erickson,

Davenport

Chris Evan-

Schwartz,

Cedar Rapids

Sally Frudden,

Charles City

Nancy Gardner,

West Liberty

Jane Peck,

Fort Madison

Kathie Readout,

Marshalltown

Dinh VanLo,

Des Moines

**Early Childhood
Research Summit
held on
November 18, 2003**

John Calhoun, Empowerment Coordinator, Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (Woodbury County), is the team leader for the Early Learning to K-12 team, also known as Team 1. After the full Council met the morning of October 24, teams met in the afternoon to organize their work.

According to Calhoun, "The task that has been assigned the ILC is very ambitious. The Governor has laid out a timeframe that requires recommendations to be submitted to him within one year. However, I am very impressed with the quality and expertise that exists on the early childhood team. There is a tremendous amount of talent and diverse backgrounds that will greatly enhance our ability to create a product that will meet the needs of Iowa children."

He adds, "Although it is very early in the process, I believe the early childhood team will make recommendations that will build on the existing work that is currently being done throughout the state and that the work will be built on the concept of the creation of an early childhood system and/or systems. It is also very apparent that the work of the ILC will probably continue past the stage of the current one year time frame. The sense that exists is that the ILC will need to continue to tweak and promote the implementation of the recommendations presented. The early childhood team is optimistic the work we are doing will be valued as Iowa continues to attempt to improve the lives of children and the economic future of the state."

Future development from the Iowa Learns Council and Team 1 will be published in future newsletters.

The Department of Education has created a website for Iowa Learns Council information and may be accessed at <http://www.state.ia.us/iowalearns/>.

Adjunct to the Iowa Early Care, Health and Education Congress, a research summit on early childhood issues was held the evening of November 18, 2003. Sponsored through the auspices of the State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Grant, sixteen researchers and early childhood practitioners had an opportunity to begin seeking ways to improve collaboration in advancing early care, health and education system development in Iowa.

This was an initial dialogue between early childhood researchers from Iowa Universities and the practitioners to build a collaboration and to increase the awareness and the effectiveness of the early care, health and education system building activities.

Each researcher had submitted an abstract of their research on early care and education, access to medical homes and health insurance, mental health and social-emotional development, parent education and family support, or comprehensive system development.

Donna Bryant, Senior Scientist, Frank Porter Graham Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, facilitated the dialogue.

At the end of the meeting, all present agreed that this was a good opportunity to begin the dialogue on developing communication lines between researchers and practitioners to support system development and promoting state-of-art practices to pursue the vision, "*Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.*" Future opportunities to further define means to increase collaboration will be scheduled.

BOTTOM-UP VIEW OF QUALITY



If you can fit into the little Mary Jane's or Buster Brown's, here is a way to think about early care settings on a daily basis.

Lilian Katz, writing in the March, 1992 issue of *Child Care Information Exchange* ("Looking at the Quality of Early Childhood Programs"), observed . . .

"The characteristics of a program that really predict its outcome are the answers to the bottom-up question which is: *What does it feel like to be a child in this environment?*"

"Obtaining answers to this question is not easy! It requires making the very best guess one can about how each individual child in this group experiences the program. We can proceed by asking about the environment on behalf of each child:

- * Is it welcoming rather than merely captivating?
- * Do I belong in the group rather than merely have a good time?
- * Am I usually accepted by adults rather than scolded?
- * Am I taken seriously rather than just precious or cute?
- * Am I usually accepted by some peers rather than isolated, neglected, or rejected?
- * Is this environment usually involving rather than entertaining?
- * Are the activities meaningful rather than mindless?
- * Are the activities engaging rather than amusing?
- * Are the activities interesting rather than boring?
- * Do I usually come here willingly rather than reluctantly?"

ExchangeEveryDay, September 30, 2003, Issue: 827

<http://www.childcareexchange.com>

Other Events and Activities

2004 National Smart Start Conference

Building Brighter Futures
January 25-28, 2004
Greensboro, NC

www.ncsmartstart.org

Gold Seal Award Recipients Recognized At the Congress

Gold Seal Awards Since April 2003

Family Providers

Cindy Dunkerson, Des Moines
Margaret Mnayer, Waterloo

Center-Based Providers

Hawkeye Child Development Center,
Waterloo

ICCSA Preschool Program at Hills
Elementary School,
Hills

ICCSA preschool Program and Child
Care Program at Mark Twain
Elementary School,
Iowa City

Kiddie Karousel Academy,
LeClaire

Kidsville Child Care and Preschool,
Independence

Neighborhood Centers of Johnson
County - Broadway Site,
Iowa City

Neighborhood Centers of Johnson
County - Pheasant Ridge Center,
Iowa City

Scott Community College Head
Start,
Davenport

The Children's Village at Hoover,
Davenport

Governor Vilsack recognized the 2003 Gold Seal recipients at the Iowa Early care, Health and Education Congress on November 18, 2003.

The Gold Seal Award is presented to child development homes for achieving accreditation from the Association for Family Child Care and to licensed child care centers that have achieved accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The following high-quality child care providers, in attendance at Congress were recognized:

Ankeny Children's Center.....	Ankeny
Apple Tree Children's Center.....	West Des Moines (Pleasant Street)
Apple Tree Children's Center.....	Urbandale
Apple Tree Children's Center.....	West Des Moines (Ashworth Road)
Apple Tree Children's Center.....	Norwalk
Apple Tree Children's Center	Clive
The Children's Place at Farm Bureau.....	West Des Moines
The Children's Village at Hoover.....	Davenport
Crittendon/Stella Sanford Child Development Center.....	Sioux City
Dallas County Hospital Day Care.....	Perry
DMACC Child Development Center.....	Ankeny
Elliot House Family Child Care.....	Spencer
The Formative Years.....	Ames
Handicare Inc.....	Coralville
Hawkeye Child Development Center.....	Waterloo
House of Mercy/John R. Grubb Child Development Center.....	Des Moines
Kidsville Child Care and Preschool.....	Independence
KinderCare Learning Center.....	Urbandale
Kinder Care Learning Center.....	Newton
Peck Development Center.....	Newton
University Community Child Care.....	Ames
Veteran's Administration Child Care Center.....	Knoxville





Waiting Room Poster and Step-By-Step Guide Now Available!!

A new poster, *Protect Your Family's Health With Confidence*, is available that can be displayed in waiting rooms and reception areas. The following information is on the poster: a definition of health insurance, the importance of having health insurance, and a comparison of the different types of insurance available.

This new poster is 24" x 24" and can be ordered by calling Covering Kids and Families at 1-800-383-3826.

Additionally, the Covering Kids and Families staff is pleased to announce the release of a redesigned publication entitled, "Helping Families Access Health Insurance: A Step-By-Step Guide." The new guide, one publication in both English and Spanish, provides families with information on the steps to take to enroll their children in *hawk-i* or Medicaid.

To obtain a copy of this publication, contact the Iowa Healthy Families Line at 1-800-369-2229. The publication number is IPDH 114.

Partnering with Parents Schedule

Des Moines:

Dec 4: Feeding Children and Physical Activities for Families

Dec 18: Guiding, Nurturing, and Motivating Children
Jan 8: Measuring Program Outcomes

Jan 22: Financial Stability and Family Well-being

Jan 22: Building Support for Yourself and Professional Development

Contact: Beth Fleming
bflem@iastate.edu or Sharon Mays
smays@iastate.edu

Council Bluffs:

December 11th - Cultural Perspectives on Parenting

January 8th Parenting with Special Challenges

January 22nd Exploring Child-rearing Strategies and Assessing Parenting Education Resources

February 12th Parent Learning in Small Groups

February 26th Understanding Child and Parent Development

March 11th Feeding Children and Physical Activities for Families

March 25th - Guiding, Nurturing, and Motivating Children

April 8th - Measuring Program Outcomes

May 13 - Financial Stability and Family Well-being and Building Support for Yourself and Professional Development

Contact Mary Hughes
mhughes@iastate.edu or David Seilstad
seilstad@iastate.edu

Plans for 2004 sites include:

Cedar Rapids (contact Kristi Cooper
kcoop@iastate.edu)

Creston area (contact Donna Donald
ddonald@iastate.edu)

NW Iowa (contact Rhonda Rosenboom
rsosen@iastate.edu)

Waterloo/Cedar Falls (contact Donna Andrusyk
andrusyk@iastate.edu)

Developing core competencies in parenting educators: Partnering with Parents, an in-depth training series

There is growing recognition of parenting education as a profession and one of several comprehensive family support strategies that is designed to decrease the incidence of child abuse, while increasing school achievement and enhancing family resiliency (DeBord et al., 2002).. Parenting education has been defined as programs and resources offered to parents and caregivers that support them or increase their capacity and confidence in raising healthy children (DeBord, 2000; Kaiser, 1999). A parenting educator has been described as one who "plans, coordinates, and teaches in an instructional program that addresses the intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, and physical needs of both parents and children. Parent education seeks to support respectful, reciprocal interactions between parents and their children" (The Work, Community, & Family Education Program, February 5, 2002).

In response to the growing demand for parenting educators and the need to ensure that educators have basic knowledge and skills relevant to facilitate parenting education, Iowa State University Extension developed *Partnering with Parents*, an in-depth training series consisting of 50 hours of face-to-face learning and 20 hours of online learning. *Partnering with Parents* has been peer reviewed by Cooperative Extension State Specialists and faculty in five states. "*Partnering with Parents is unique. It takes parenting education research and theory and applies it in very practical ways to the daily work of parenting educators. Program evaluation data reveal that 95% of the learners that complete the series feel they are competent or very competent to deliver parenting education as compared to 32% before the series*" says Kimberly Greder, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies and Family Life Extension State Specialist for Iowa State University.

Individuals can register for the entire series (10 days of training and online learning activities) or for modules individually. Individuals who have completed Family Development Certification Training can earn a Parenting Education Certificate from ISU Extension by completing 7 of the 11 modules offered. ISU undergraduate and graduate course credit and continuing education units for nurses and social workers are also available. To register and/or to learn more, visit the *Partnering with Parents* Web site <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp>.

Meet DHS Director, Kevin Concannon



Kevin Concannon was appointed by Governor Vilsack on March 28, 2003, to serve as the Director for the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS is an agency that employs approximately 5,000 employees that serve on average 700,000 Iowans per year. The agency budget of \$2.9 billion supports programs and services including; Medicaid managed health care and behavioral health care, welfare reform, child support enforcement, child care, foster care, child and adult protective services, juvenile justice services, and nursing facility and community-based services for children and adults. The Department of Human Services also oversees management of nine institutions; two juvenile, two resource centers for people with disabilities, four mental health institutions, and the Civil Commitment Unit for Sexual Offenders (CCUSO).

Prior to his appointment, Kevin served as Maine’s Department of Human Services Commissioner from February 1995 to February 2003; and was Director of the Oregon Department of Human Services from 1987 to 1995.

Kevin has also had national leadership roles, serving as President of the American Public Welfare Association (APWA) and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. He has served as a member of the APWA’s Board of Directors, the American Public Human Services Association Board, and many other national organizations. He is a member of the Milbank Fund’s Reforming States Steering Committee.

Mr. Concannon’s educational background includes a BA degree from Saint Francis Xavier University and a MSW degree from Saint Francis Xavier University and the Maritime School of Social Work, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Ted Stilwill elected president of the Council of Chief State School Officers



Ted Stilwill, director of the Iowa Department of Education, today was elected president of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) at its Annual Meeting in Indianapolis.

Stilwill has served on CCSSO's board since 1998 as president-elect and vice president, in addition to serving on numerous task forces including Strengthening Professional Practice (co-chair), Learning Technologies, and Civility, Safety and Student Opportunity. He has also served on the Committee on Legislation.

The Council of Chief State School Officers is a nationwide nonprofit organization composed of public officials who lead the departments responsible for elementary and secondary education in the United States, the U.S. extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity. In representing the chief education officers, CCSSO works on behalf of the state agencies that serve pre-K–12 students throughout the nation.

New Findings Demonstrate Early Childhood Home Visitation Prevents Child Maltreatment (Center for Disease Control)

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Community Guide

Contact: Brad Myers

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In 1996, 4.3% of children (under the age of 18) were reported to be victims of maltreatment. Child maltreatment, including abuse and/or neglect, is not only traumatic in itself, but increases the risk of adverse consequences among maltreated children, such as early pregnancy, drug abuse, school failure, and mental illness. Children who have been physically abused are also more likely to perpetrate aggressive behavior and violence later in their lives. The question is: *what strategies are effective in preventing child maltreatment?*

A systematic review of published studies, conducted on behalf of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services by a team of experts, developed an analytic framework and found that early childhood home visitation programs are effective in reducing child maltreatment among high-risk families. On the basis of strong evidence of effectiveness, the task force recommends that these programs be implemented or continued.

Background on Early Childhood Home Visitation

- *Home visitation* is defined as a program that includes visitation of parent(s) and child(ren) in their home by trained personnel (such as nurses, social workers, other professionals, paraprofessionals, or community peers) who convey information, and/or offer support, and/or provide training. Visits must occur during at least part of the child's first two years of life, but may have been initiated during pregnancy and may continue after the child's second birthday.
- Programs may include (but are not limited to) one or more of the following components: training of parent(s) on prenatal and infant care, training on parenting, child abuse and neglect prevention, developmental interaction with infants/toddlers, development of problem solving and life skills for parents, assistance with educational and work opportunities, and linkage with community services. Programs may be accompanied by the provision of daycare, parent group meetings for support and/or instruction, transportation, and other services.

Findings from the Systematic Review

- Early childhood home visitation can prevent child maltreatment in high-risk families. In studies reviewed, home visiting resulted in a 40% reduction in child maltreatment episodes.
- Longer duration programs produce larger effects; programs of less than 2 years duration did not appear to be effective.
- Professional home visitors may be more effective than trained paraprofessionals, but longer-duration programs with trained paraprofessionals can also be effective.
- All programs reviewed were directed at families considered to be at high risk of child maltreatment, (e.g., single or young mothers, low-income households, families with low birth weight infants).
- The published evidence is insufficient to determine whether home visiting affects other violence by visited children or parents (including violence such as violence against partners and violent crime). These are areas that might benefit from further research.

Publications: The Guide to Community Preventive Services (Community Guide) provides recommendations on population-based interventions to promote health and to prevent disease, injury, disability, and premature death, appropriate for use by communities and healthcare systems. For more information about the Community Guide (including links to publications and a variety of resources) see www.thecommunityguide.org and for more information about the violence prevention review see www.thecommunityguide.org/violence/

Seven Things Legislators (and Other Policy Makers) Need to Know About School Readiness

Links to Empowerment Web sites

State: www.empowerment.state.ia.us

Benton County -- NEW!

www.bcempowerment.com

Buchanan Delaware Fayette:

www.bdfempowerment.org

Dubuque: www.empowerdubuque.org

Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell:

www.fmccom.org

HAWC (Howard, Allamakee,

Winneshiak):

www.HAWC-Iowa.com

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

Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright

www.buildingfamilies.net

Jasper:

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

g/

Johnson: www.jcempowerment.org

Linn:

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

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

Marshall:

www.youthandviolence.org

Pocahontas, Calhoun and

Webster:

www.linking-families.com

Polk:

www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org

liance.org

Scott:

www.scottcountyempowerment.org/

org/

Story:

<http://www.storycountyfamily.org>

org

Washington:

www.empowerwashington.org

Woodbury:

www.siouxlandship.org

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

A resource packet has been developed for the State Early-Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN) to provide easy-to-use materials to explain the importance of school readiness to policy makers. The Child and Family Policy Center, Des Moines, developed the material and packet.

The "seven things" are described in easy to read handouts titled:

1. The Earliest Years Count
2. Nurture (as well as nature) Matters
3. School Readiness is Multidimensional
4. School Unreadiness Costs
5. Parents Work
6. Quality Matters
7. Investments Pay off

The resource packets include:

- A brief description of the seven points, both in paragraph form and as a set of key, bulleted points
- A PowerPoint presentation for use in describing the seven points, suitable for a 10-15 presentation
- More detailed, two-page descriptions of each of the seven points, including a list of references
- An appendix providing national census workforce participation data

Individuals and organizations are encouraged to adapt the resource packet materials in any way that makes sense to them. The CD in the packet provides all the information in the packet. SECPTAN has not copyrighted this information, but would request acknowledgment when this information is used.

For a free packet, contact Sheri Floyd at the Child and Family Policy Center at (515)280-9027.

SECPTAN is supported by three national foundations committed to improving early childhood services that lead to better school readiness and success: [the Packard Foundation](#), [the Kauffman Foundation](#), and [the Ford Foundation](#). The Network also coordinates its work with the [State School Readiness Indicators Project](#) supported by these foundations and with five national organizations serving state decision-makers: [the National Governors Association](#), [the National Conference of State Legislatures](#), [the Education Commission of the States](#), [the Council of Chief State School Officers](#) and [the National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#).

For more information about the State Early-Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN) got to www.finebynine.org/network.html.



2-1-1 Now Available Throughout Most of Iowa!



Every hour of every day, someone in Iowa needs to find essential community services – everything from finding an after school program to securing adequate care for a child or an aging parent. We’ve all faced this challenge. Yet the search for this kind of help often involves navigating a bureaucratic maze. Where to start?

The answer, increasingly, is 2-1-1. An abbreviated phone dialing code, the 2-1-1 service is a shortcut designed to link Iowans in need of help to information and referrals to basic health, human services or community resources.

In September, several regions in Iowa rolled out 211. Nearly 90 percent of Iowans have access with a goal of making the service statewide when possible. Trained information and referral specialists answer 2-1-1 calls and access a database with a variety of local, regional and state programs and services. They assess the situation and refer callers to the most appropriate resources to fit the specific situation. It’s a quick, convenient and completely confidential way for people in the community to access the programs and services they need.

While services that are offered through 2-1-1 vary from community to community, 2-1-1 provides callers with information and referrals to human services such as:

Basic Human Needs Resources: food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rental assistance.

Physical and Mental Health Resources: health insurance programs, Medicaid and maternal health, Children’s Health Insurance Program, medical information lines, crisis services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

Employment Supports: financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance programs.

Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities: adult day care, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, and homemaker services.

Support for Children, Youth and Families: childcare, after school programs, Head Start resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, and protective services.

Iowa currently has successful, longstanding I&R agencies. However, **a universal number** to reach them and **expansion of the current coverage** will **simplify** the often-frustrating navigation of human service agencies and programs for **ALL** Iowans.

Preparing Iowa's Preschool Children for Healthy Lifestyles

Susan Pohl, M.S.,
R.D.

The epidemic of obesity has been getting a lot of attention lately. Headlines scream the most recent statistics, sales of popular diets are surging and the environment is scrutinized from cracks in sidewalks to fast food restaurants. How does this growing awareness affect our work with preparing children for school? Recommendations stem from observations on early childhood development.

Children are in a period of enhanced receptiveness and skill development. In these early years, children are learning the life skills that will prepare them for the more sophisticated academic and social learning that will challenge them later. While children learn to hold a fork, chew a tough piece of meat and recognize hunger and satiety, they are also curious about and beneficiaries of the other processes that contribute to the food supply: food production, decision-making, planning, preparation, and presentation by a trusted adult. Providing opportunities to participate in these aspects of food will increase children's acceptance of new foods. Physical activity is the other side of the weight maintenance coin. Being active may come naturally to many children, but also needs to be nurtured. Large and fine motor skills, eye hand coordination, balance and team work can be practiced in the child care setting.

Social perceptions are formed early. Research has demonstrated that early on, children begin to prefer to play with thinner children over heavier children. When heavier children are isolated from peer interactions, the behaviors that lead to greater weight gain can be reinforced, such as eating for pleasure and preferring sedentary activities. The child-care providers' role includes fostering an inclusive atmosphere, encouraging reserved children to participate in active play and assisting children to gain the social, physical and emotional skills to be successful.

In summary, the role of the child-care setting is to provide a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice the skills of a healthy lifestyle. The position paper, *The Prevention of Child and Adolescent Obesity in Iowa*, (available at www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/wic/obesity.pdf. - click on "publications") identifies steps that can be taken in homes and child-care settings to prevent the development of weight problems in children. Prevention is stressed over treatment due to the many drawbacks of treatment. Treatment is associated with separating a child out for special treatment, withholding food, labeling foods as "good" or "bad", and diets backfiring from extreme hunger or progressing to eating disorders.

The Iowa Department of Education received a Team Nutrition Grant to develop guidance for child-care settings. Three sets of cards were produced: *Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children cards*, *Setting the Stage: Activity Lesson Cards* and *Setting the Stage: Policies and Best Practices Cards*. The cards and training can be obtained through the Child Care Resource and Referral and Iowa State University Extension Food and Nutrition Specialists. The activity cards will also be on the Iowa Department of Education website (www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/tn/index.html) soon.

Each WIC agency in the state has received a copy of the video, *Parents and Children Sharing Food Tasks*, which demonstrates ways to create a healthy feeding relationship in families. WIC agencies can be contacted to borrow this video and request that a dietitian conduct a discussion group with parents about these ideas.

Tax Credits Outreach Campaign Encourage Iowa Families to Take Advantage of Newly Increased Tax Benefits



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No one likes to think about taxes. But recent changes to the federal tax laws can put thousands of dollars in the pockets of working families with children this coming tax-filing season.

As a result of these recent changes – including the first increase in over twenty years in the value of the federal Credit for Child and Dependent Care expenses Credit – Iowa families may be eligible for one or more of the following tax credits:

- Federal Earned Income Credit worth up to \$4,204;
- Federal Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses worth up to \$2,100
- Federal Child Tax Credit worth up to \$1,000 per child

In addition, Iowa also offers these tax credits for families:

- Iowa Child and Dependent Care Credit worth up to \$1,575
- Iowa Earned Income Credit worth up to \$273.

These credits can be used by families to help meet their child care expenses, and some are specifically designed to do just that. Even if families do not owe income taxes, they still may be eligible for a refund check simply by claiming these credits on federal and state tax returns!

Confused? You are not alone. That's why Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, a program of the Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network and the National Women's Law Center are launching a tax credits outreach campaign to help inform Iowa's working families with children about

- The thousands of dollars they may be entitled to receive through these credits.
- The location of free tax preparation sites that may assist them in filing their taxes and claiming these credits.

This tax credits outreach campaign will begin in January 2004. Public service announcements placed by Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral will begin to get the word out to families. We will be asking Empowerment Coordinators for help in getting information to qualifying families. Fliers, posters and other written materials developed by the National Women's Law Center and Internal Revenue Service will be available to you by mail and email to distribute to the child care providers and families you work with.

For more information about the tax credits outreach campaign, contact Cathy Wheatcraft at the Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network at 515-883-1206 or cwheatcraft@iowachildnetwork.org.

For more information on the federal and state child care credits, visit the Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network website at www.iowachildnetwork.org and the National Women's Law Center website at www.nwlc.org.

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.