



Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

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Questions/Comments:
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The 10th Annual Iowa Early Childhood Care & Education Congress

Building State Collaborations

We are excited about the Agenda for the upcoming Congress. To be held at the Scheman Center in Ames, Iowa on November 19 and 20th, this conference will be a “*Can’t Miss Item*” on your Calendar. We have some great keynote speakers as well as awesome workshops for you to attend.

Featured speakers include: Former Governor of North Carolina, James Hunt, Dr. Ross Thompson, a co-author of “*From Neurons to Neighborhoods*,” representatives from North Carolina’s Smart Start initiative, Linda Lewis from the Department of Health and Human Services Regional Office, and Dr. Sue Hegland from Iowa State University.

An exhibit fair will be conducted on the 20th for everyone to share information about their efforts and focus of interest!

For more information about registration and workshops schedule, click on the website link below.

<http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/GeneralInfo/congressbrochure.pdf>

We will also be combining the previous Day on the Hill and Empowerment Exhibit Fair activities. Please reserve the afternoon of February 4, 2003 to hear Ann Crittendon speak on advocacy and February 5 as the Day on the Hill/Exhibit Fair to be held at the Capitol. We will keep you informed as details become more final.

*Iowa’s Early
Childhood Vision:*

Every Child,
beginning at birth,
will be healthy and
successful.

Community Empowerment Board Makeup



4th in a Series: Members Representing “Consumer” Members Representing “Consumer”

The community board can obtain valuable insight into the “real world” of their community’s support for families through the eyes and ears of a consumer. Often the consumer voice is absent from the meetings or hesitant to provide input at a board meeting. In order to have an effective community plan to support young children and their families, it is essential to have a balance of community representation actively participating, including the consumer.

The Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) for Community Empowerment defines consumer as “the individual or a family member who is or has been receiving services or who is impacted by the community plan.” The consumer may be counted toward the 51% citizen membership if the consumer meets the IAC definition of a citizen.

To have consumers be an active voice for Community Boards, strive for the following:

- Schedule meetings in advance and at a time the consumer can easily attend.
- Members reach out and engage the consumer members prior to the board meeting and encourage attendance.
- Encourage attendance by removing potential barriers. Provide childcare during the meeting or transportation to the meeting.
- Assign experienced board members as “mentors” to all new members, including consumers.
- Identify an active and important role and responsibility for the consumer member.
- Ask the consumers for opinions, experiences, and comments on agenda items and issues.
- Have more than one consumer on a board when members include professional and elected representatives.
- Develop a consumer advisory committee to give the consumer members suggestions for policy development, issues and community planning.

Smart Start Update

Two members from the Smart Start Technical Assistance Team attended Iowa Empowerment Board Meeting in July. During the meeting, the Board developed a unifying vision for all Iowa's young children and began to articulate specific goals for the five results adopted by Community Empowerment in order to promote a seamless and integrated early care, health and education system for young children and their families. The unifying vision is *"Every Child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful."*

Since the July meeting, progress has been made on sharing the vision and on strengthening accountability through our work with the stakeholders group that participated in the original assessment phase of the grant. We're now at a point where we need to widen the stakeholder net and seek their input.

In order to gather that broad input and support, we've arranged three regional stakeholder meetings to be held in October. We invite you to be part of shaping this early childhood system by participating in one of these sessions that will be facilitated by our Smart Start Coach, Leslie Anderson.

- Tuesday, October 29th, Iowa Hall, Room ABC, 3rd Floor, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
- Wednesday, October 30, Community Room, Learning Resource Center, 3550 George M. Mills Parkway, West Des Moines
- Thursday, October 31, Carrollton Inn, North Highway 71, Carroll

Each session will start at 12:30 p.m. and end by 4:00 p.m. **Please RSVP indicating which session you will be attending. Space is limited. RSVP to Kris.Bell@idom.state.ia.us as soon as possible.**

If you'd like more information about the Smart Start initiative, their website is: www.ncsmartstart.org. Information about this grant opportunity is located under the National section.

I Something

I See Something...

There are times – waiting in the doctor’s office, sitting on a bus – which can be boring. Here’s a game to share that can be played anywhere, whenever time drags. It teaches your child how to get information by asking good questions.

Say: “I see something.” It has to be something you can both see. Then give a clue: “It’s on the table,” is an easy clue. “It’s red and square,” may be a pretty tough clue. “It’s bright when it’s on and dark when it’s off,” is a kind of riddle. “It’s made of leather,” is harder.

If one clue isn’t enough, add another: “It’s red and square and soft.” “It’s red and square and soft and I’m leaning against it.”

Children just starting this game have no good strategy for getting the answer. They look around and guess wildly. “Is it my shoe?” “Is it the box?” So get your child to pick something (“I see...”). Listen to his/her first clue. Then ask questions of him/her that will help reveal your strategies: “Is it up high or down low?” That tells a person where to look.

“What color is it?” “Is it smaller than my shoe?” These questions help narrow the choices. With a little practice, you can develop your own rules for a game that will entertain you both and help pass the time.

*From **Growing Together** which is published by Growing Child, Inc.,*

New Member to the State Empowerment Team!

The State Empowerment Team is pleased to announce its newest team member. Gretchen Hageman joins the team from the Department of Public Health.

Gretchen Hageman has been employed with the Iowa Department of Public Health – Family Health Bureau since 1999. She coordinates the Iowa Title V Block grant, the Maternal and Child Health Advisory, the Iowa Child and Family Household Health Survey, and provides technical assistance to the Maternal and Child Health contract agencies. She received her undergraduate degree from University of Northern Iowa in Health Promotion and Master’s Degree in Community Health from University of Northern Iowa. Gretchen is married and has two sons. Gretchen represents the Department of Public Health on the Community Empowerment State Team.



Upcoming Events

Empowerment Board

Meeting Schedule
October 4, 2002

January 10, 2003
April 4, 2003
July 11, 2003
October 3, 2003

State Advisory Council

Meeting Schedule
March 11, 2003
June 10, 2003
August 26, 2003

Contact/Coordinator

Meeting Schedule
February 26, 2003
May 28, 2003
September 10, 2003

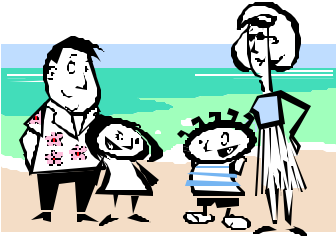
Mark Your Calendars!! Early Care & Education Congress

(Joining forces with
Empowerment
Conference)
November 19 & 20, 2002
Scheman Center, Ames

Day on the Hill/Exhibit Fair

February 4 and 5, 2003

New Mandatory Reporter Training Requirements



ABUSE EDUCATION REVIEW PANEL

Iowans who are considered mandatory reporters for child or dependent adult abuse may be impacted by legislation passed in 2001 by the Iowa General Assembly. As of May 1, 2002, the Abuse Education Review Panel, under the director of the Iowa Department of Public Health, must approve the training curricula for selected mandatory reporter training programs.

The process calls for providers to complete an application describing how the materials they are using for either child abuse, dependent adult abuse, or combination training meets the seven criteria deemed necessary for a curriculum to be approved. **Facilities wishing to use a panel-approved curriculum still must apply to the panel for approval to teach that approved curriculum. This is done by completing and submitting the first page of the application stating the name of the approved curriculum and its approval number (found on the notice of approval) on the curriculum title line.**

According to Iowa law, six classes of professionals must report suspected abuse within 24 hours from the time they notice the suspected abuse. Those professions are health, mental health, education, law enforcement, childcare, and social work. These people are required by Iowa law to complete a training course in mandatory reporting of abuse. Persons covered by the new requirement include professionals such as certified nurse aides, X-ray technicians, home health aides, peace officers, child-care workers and licensed teachers. Other Iowans considered mandatory reporters of abuse might work in professions that require a state license. It is the responsibility of those licensing boards to approve the mandatory reporter training, and workers in those professions may not be covered under the new requirement.

Complete information about the application process and a list of the approved training courses is available at the Abuse Education Review Panel website: http://www.idph.state.ia.us/dir_off/AbuseEducation/default.htm, or by contacting Mary Anderson at the Iowa Department of Public Health, 515-242-6333.

Guiding Young Children: How Am I Doing?

Young children don't always understand the do's and don'ts of behavior. As a parent it's easy to get frustrated. That's why it is important to sit back and take a look at how you guide your children. Here are some good questions to ask yourself.

- *Do I listen carefully when my child talks about ideas or feelings?*
- *When speaking or listening to my child, do I make eye contact?*
- *Do I use short sentences?*
- *Do I give positive directions? (e.g., "Walk!" rather than "Don't run!")*
- *Do I state limits or rules clearly and follow through on enforcing them?*
- *Do I give attention to my child before he or she demands it?*
- *Do I arrange toys and play things so they easily can be reached and used with a minimum of help?*
- *Is there a consistent, low stress routine for eating, play and bedtime?*
- *Do I model the type of behavior I would like to see in my children?*

None of us is a perfect parent, but we can work to improve ourselves.

From ISU Extension Publications, "So Alive...three to five!" newsletter. February 1993.

Meet Iowa Empowerment Board Member

Carolyn Olson-Illg



Carolyn Olson-Illg is the Executive Director of the Fort Dodge Housing Agency, in Fort Dodge, Iowa. The Fort Dodge Housing Agency assists low-income families with HUD assistance monitoring 617 Section 8 vouchers and 138 public housing units within the City of Fort Dodge and also manages private housing units within the City.

Carolyn is a graduate of Des Moines Area Community College with an A.S. Degree as a Paralegal, Buena Vista University with a B.A. degree in Human Services and Drake University with a Masters degree in Public Administration.

Since 1999 she has served on the Iowa Empowerment Board, appointed by Governors Terry E. Branstad and Tom Vilsack. In addition to the board's agenda, Carolyn serves on a sub-committee that focuses on fiscal accountability issues. Olson-Illg serves as a board member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency board for Webster County, the Continuing Education Advisory Council for Iowa Central Community College, and is active with the Fort Dodge Free Clinics as a volunteer and a board member.

Prior to coming to the Fort Dodge Housing Agency, Carolyn was the Executive Director of Connections, a local human service agency, and also the Webster County Center Director and FaDSS Coordinator for Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. Previous to that she served as a Paralegal with Attorney Steve Kersten at the Kersten Law Firm in Fort Dodge.

Carolyn is a native of Bode, Iowa, and is the mother of five children: Curtis Illg, Bode, Iowa; Brian Illg and his wife Molly, Clare, Iowa; Val Illg, Phoenix, Arizona; Jeff Illg, Kirkwood College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and Elizabeth Illg, a sophomore at Fort Dodge Senior High.

We appreciate Carolyn's wealth of experience, knowledge, and background she brings to Iowa Community Empowerment.

Community Story:

Making a Difference for Kids in Decatur County

*Thanks to Dianne Riley for
submitting this article.*



Decatur County was first designated as an Empowerment Area with the second group of areas funded. Decatur County located in southern Iowa is either the poorest county in the state or the second poorest depending on the calendar year that you check the statistics. Our greatest need was for preschool programs, which would serve four year olds before they went to kindergarten. We had a Head Start program for 40 children and a Shared Visions Program for 16 children in one of our three school districts. These programs served the lowest income children. There still were many children whose families qualified for a free or reduced lunch that did not qualify for the local Head Start Program. We applied for funding to provide three preschool programs, one in each school district within the county that would be modeled after Head Start.

Our collaboration includes South Central Iowa Community Action Head Start Program, Central Decatur Community School District, Lamoni Community School District and Mormon Trail Community School District. Each partner has a 28E Agreement with the Decatur County Empowerment Area, which lays out the responsibilities as well as the financial arrangements for a fiscal year. SCICAP Head Start hires a coordinator who has responsibility for ensuring the preschool programs meet the Head Start Performance Standards, assists with the parent involvement activities, recruits and verifies income of eligible families offers training and technical assistance and serves as a resource for the programs.

Each school district operates their own program including hiring the necessary staff, securing space, providing transportation, meals and follows local district policy. The teachers hold Early Childhood certification The Empowerment Area has a strong commitment to offering a quality comprehensive preschool program such as the Head Start model. Depending on the school district some programs have added wrap-around services for half of the day in order to offer a full day program. Each classroom is either a four or a five-day per week program depending on the local community. Families with incomes below 200% are given priority for acceptance into the preschool programs.

Parents within the school districts have been very supportive of the programs and pleased with the results. Dial 3 scores recorded for individual children have shown tremendous growth from the start of a school year to the end of the year. Parent involvement in their child's first school program has been fantastic!

For more information contact Dianne Riley, Head Start Director at scicapdr@grm.net



(Adapted from *Enrolling Children in Health Coverage Before They Start School: Activities for Early Childhood Programs*. Prepared for *Covering Kids* by Donna Cohen Ross and Meg Booth, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, DC, October 2001.)

Over the past few months we have been outlining *hawk-i* outreach ideas for school-based strategies. However, another key group for targeting outreach is the child care community, that includes early childhood professionals working with providers as well as providers directly. There are approximately two million children nationwide who are younger than age six and who qualify for health care coverage through Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Staff of early childhood programs, such as Head Start, child care centers, family child care homes, preschools, after-school programs, child care resource and referral agencies and others, are often used as a resource by parents who need help in finding health care for their children. Early childhood professionals can contribute significantly to efforts aimed at enrolling eligible children in Medicaid and *hawk-i*.

Examples of outreach activities that early childhood professionals could incorporate in these settings include:

Inform families about children's health care coverage: Information can be posted on classroom bulletin boards, distributed at parent meetings, sent home with children's artwork, lunch menus, and notices about upcoming events. Another good strategy is to provide information to families with children on waiting lists for subsidized child care. These children are also likely to qualify for Medicaid or *hawk-i*, and their eligibility can be determined without delay.

Enlist Head Start programs in outreach activities: Head Start and Early Head Start provide comprehensive early childhood education, social services, and health services, including health and dental screenings, and access to care, for children birth to age five. Under federal rules 90% of children in the Head Start programs must have family income below the poverty line. Virtually all Head Start children should be income-eligible for Medicaid, and it is often assumed that Head Start children are enrolled in health care coverage. Although some children may not qualify for Medicaid or *hawk-i* due to their immigration status or other factors, most should be eligible, and more outreach will help get them enrolled.

Use the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) application as an outreach tool: Children eligible for free or reduced-price child care meals are also likely to qualify for Medicaid or *hawk-i*. Child care programs now can share information from a CACFP application with Medicaid and SCHIP under certain conditions. Child care programs in Iowa that serve meals under CACFP now have an attachment to the program application informing families about *hawk-i* and provide a passive parental consent form to receive more information about *hawk-i*. (Families that do not want to have their information shared have the option to keep their CACFP application confidential.) For details on the rules of sharing data see Donna Cohen Ross, *Enrolling Children in Health Coverage: It can Start with School Lunch*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, DC, and *Covering Kids*, Columbia, SC, January 2001. Access the report at www.cbpp.org/pubs/health.htm or www.coveringkids.org.

Enroll the children of child care providers: Child care providers, who frequently earn low wages and receive few employee benefits, may have children of their own that are eligible for Medicaid or *hawk-i*. Efforts are being made to reach out to these providers and get their children enrolled in health care coverage. Providers who have experienced an easy, successful enrollment process will be better able to promote Medicaid and *hawk-i* to the families of children in their care.

Conduct outreach with local employers: Many early childhood programs have strong links with the business community. Child care resource and referral agencies may have contracts with local businesses to help their employees locate child care, or may be in-house providers. They can use these relationships to encourage businesses to alert their employees to the availability of Medicaid and *hawk-i*.

For more information about this article contact Sonni Vierling at (515) 281-4516 or svierlin@idph.state.ia.us.

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