



Early Childhood Iowa Monday Musings December 15, 2014 2014 Vol. 1, No. 1

This is a first edition of the ECI ***Monday Musings***. It is 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. Prior to this publication, information was sent out to the ECI Stakeholders as it came in, creating multiple emails with multiple information. We hope this approach will provide you information you can use, while looking at a single document. (We may on occasion send out a separate email with information if needs immediate attention.)

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

State Information:

A Message from Dr. Brad Buck, Director of the Iowa Department of Education

Dear Colleagues,

I'm very proud of our hard work as an education system to make sure all children read well by the end of third grade. Communicating this work to parents and asking for their support is an important piece of our early literacy efforts in Iowa. That's why I'm writing to ask for your help in distributing the attached letter from me to parents in your area. (*See Attachment*)

This letter explains why we are focusing on early literacy in Iowa, how the early warning system for literacy is helping students improve their reading skills as directed by a 2012 state law, and where families can find reading resources to help at home. The letter also brings attention to the parental notification component of the 2012 law.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to distribute this letter to parents using the communication tools you see fit, including email, online parent portals, newsletters and websites.

As the letter to parents emphasizes, it's critical that we all work together to improve literacy -- especially in kindergarten, first and second grades -- because prevention, not retention, is what everyone wants.

Respectfully,
Brad

Shared Visions Parent Support Programs Funding Opportunity

The application for Shared Visions Parent Support Programs will be available through IowaGrants.gov beginning **January 8, 2015**. Instructions for the application, guidance documents, and information regarding the process and timeline will be posted on the [Shared Visions Parent Program web page](#) as it becomes available.

Questions should be submitted in writing to Amy Stegeman at amy.stegeman@iowa.gov and will be addressed in a *Frequently Asked Questions* document posted on the Shared Visions Parent Program web page.

Reminder: All current Shared Visions Grantees, Preschool **and** Parent Support Programs, must apply for FY16 Shared Visions Grants. The grants will be awarded on a **competitive** basis contingent upon the annual state appropriation. Due to limited funding, it is not likely that all applicants will be awarded grants. The application for [Shared Visions Preschool Programs](#) is currently available through IowaGrants.gov.

Federal Information:

White House Summit on Early Childhood Education

On December 10, 2014, the President convened state and local policymakers, mayors, school superintendents, corporate and community leaders, and advocates for the White House Summit on Early Education, highlighting collective leadership in support of early education for America's children. Leaders shared best practices in building the public-private partnerships that are expanding early education in communities across the country. Fact Sheet: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/10/fact-sheet-invest-us-white-house-summit-early-childhood-education>

Here are some highlights from the Summit:

New HHS grants increase, improve learning opportunities for young children

HHS' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced preliminary winners for its [Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships](#) grants to improve the quality of existing child care programs and expand access to high-quality care for infants and toddlers.

Three Iowa organizations were preliminary award recipients and will be negotiating a contract with HHS. They include Drake Head Start (Des Moines), Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, Inc. (Hiawatha), and Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. (Waterloo)

Congratulation to these successful applicants!

For a complete listing: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships/grant-awardees>

Launch of "Invest in US"

Invest in US is an independent initiative organized by the First Five Years Fund and its partners in response to the President's call for action. This Initiative challenges public and private partners, business leaders, philanthropists, advocates, elected officials, and individuals to build a better nation by expanding high-quality early childhood education.

Invest in US will serve as a hub to aggregate momentum and support for early learning and provide resources to community leaders working to expand access to early childhood education: http://investinus.org/assets/Invest-in-US-Commitments_webfinal1.pdf

The Economics of Early Childhood Investments

[An analysis released today by the White House Council of Economic Advisers](#) describes the economic returns to investments in early childhood education, including increased parental earnings and employment in the short-term, reduced need for remedial education and later public school expenditures, as well as long-term outcomes such as increased educational attainment, increased earnings, improved health, and decreased involvement with the criminal justice system.

- Research suggests expanding early learning initiatives would provide **benefits to society of roughly \$8.60 for every \$1 spent.**
- **Earnings gains from increased enrollment in early childhood education would provide benefits that outweigh the costs of the program.** Researchers estimate the gain in income for recent statewide programs over a child's career to be \$9,166 to \$30,851, after taking out the cost of the program. If enrollment increased by 13 percentage points, in the long-run these earnings gains translate into an increase in GDP of 0.16 to 0.44 percent.

Policy Statement on Early Childhood Expulsion and Suspension Practices

Secretaries Burwell and Duncan announced the release of a policy statement on expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings at the White House's Summit on Early Childhood Education. Exclusionary discipline practices occur at high rates in early learning settings, and at even higher rates for young boys of color. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/news/secretaries-burwell-and-duncan-policy-statement-on-expulsion-suspension-practices>

Playbook for Becoming and Early Learning Community

The White House released a [Playbook](#) to offer strategies for local leaders to develop and expand early education in their communities. Ten organizations have stepped up to help connect leaders, and as resources become available, they will provide technical assistance, planning grants, and other resources to Early Learning Communities.

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

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