

Early Childhood Iowa receives funding that is to be used for professional development activities to support and strengthen the comprehensive early childhood system. Input is provided by the ECI Professional Development Component Group regarding needs for the system. Primarily, these funds are applied towards activities that support the entire state and could not happen at a local level. All projects are aligned with the ECI Strategic Plan and support professional development activities across the areas of early learning; family support; health, mental health, and nutrition.

In FY20, the state allocation was \$825,030 for professional development activities. A no-cost extension for Iowa's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) was granted through December 31, 2020 for activities previously approved. This meant \$472,782.98 in federal funding was utilized to extend professional development statewide efforts. Funded projects included the Iowa Family Support Credential; Infant and Toddler Mental Health; Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS); T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA Scholarships and Child Development Association (CDA) support; Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA; Child Care Nurse Consultant; the establishment of the early childhood system hub of resources, and overall professional development coordination.



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

IDPH continued to support implementation of Iowa's Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health Endorsement®, and promoted a children's mental health system that values and encourages professional competency in infant and early childhood mental health. The 2019-2020 state ECI PD (\$99,408.00) funds contracted were used to pay for the annual renewal fee for the Infant Mental Health Endorsement License, the initial purchase of the Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement License for those who serve children age 36 through 60 months of age, and opportunities for reflective consultation sessions.

Funds also supported a part-time (20 hours/month) experienced Endorsement Coordinator to assist professionals in completing their applications for Endorsement; monthly Reflective Supervision/Consultation sessions for early childhood professionals; ten professional development trainings (moved to an online format due to COVID-19); and modifications to Iowa's Connections Matter training curriculum to target early childhood professionals. The revised "Connections Matter in Early Childhood" curriculum will be rolled out in 2021.

Trainings provided with ECI PD funds this year include the following:

- Topic: "Improving Parents as Communication Teachers ImPACT"
 - Speaker: Dr. Kelly Pelzel, University of Iowa
 - Date: Feb. 17, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number participating: 5

- This event helped professionals understand how to work with parents and caregivers of young children with autism to improve communication and interaction.
- Topic: “WePlay”
 - Speaker: Tracy Vozar
 - Date: April 20, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number participating: 10
 - This event provided an overview of the WePlay program, a six-session curriculum that helps parents learn how to play and interact with infants.
- Topic: “Navigating Addiction within the Family”
 - Speaker: Nick Leerhoff, St. Gregory’s Recovery Center
 - Date: May 4, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number of Attendance: 123
 - This webinar provided participants with insight into complex family dynamics around addiction.
- Topic: “Impact of Parental Stress on the Social Emotional Development of Children”
 - Speaker: Joyce Westphal, Full Circle Therapy
 - Date: May 11, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number of Attendance: 245
 - This event examined what family support professionals can do to help parents foster social emotional development.
- Topic: “What Happens after the Call: A Look into Iowa’s Child Welfare Agency”
 - Speaker: Roxanne Riesberg, DHS
 - Date: May 14, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number of Attendance: 147
 - This training provided participants with the protocol and procedures the Department of Human Services in Iowa takes when they receive a child abuse case report.
- Topic: “Relaxation Strategies for Children”
 - Speaker: Gayle Luze, ISU Human Dev. and Family Studies Dept.
 - Date: May 20, 2020 (Pre-recorded, “on-demand style” YouTube video)
 - Number of Views: 98
 - This video was provided by faculty from Iowa State University and provided strategies for parents and caregivers to utilize to help young children learn how to self-regulate.
- Topic: “SPARK for Autism”
 - Speaker: Dr. Jacob Michaelson, University of Iowa Dept. of Psychiatry
 - Date: June 15, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number of Attendance: 15 members
 - Dr. Michaelson reviewed the current state of genetic research in autism while also introducing the SPARK study and the impact that it has had so far.
- Topic: “1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative”
 - Speaker: Michelle Holst, Iowa Department of Public Health

- Date: Aug. 17, 2020 (Online training)
- Number of Attendance: 20
- Michelle provided an overview of Iowa's 1st Five Health Mental Development Initiative, including how referrals are made and how families can connect with the program.
- Topic: "Diversity Informed Tenets"
 - Presented by trainers designated by the Irving Harris Foundation
 - Date: Sept. 8th & 9th and Sept. 17th and 18th (two separate training cohorts)
 - Number attending: 45
 - An overview of the Diversity Informed Tenets for working with infants and their families from diverse backgrounds. This was originally intended as an in-person event, with a capacity of 100. Due to Covid, it was moved online and limited to 45.
- Topic: "Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation"
 - Speaker: Dr. Jacob Michaelson, University of Iowa Dept. of Psychiatry
 - Date: Aug. 16, 2020 (Online training)
 - Number of Attendance: 5
 - An overview of infant and early childhood mental health consultation in Iowa, what it looks like, how it is being implemented, etc.

Performance Measures:

- 10 professional development trainings provided on topics related to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (held online due to COVID-19)
- 10 Iowa early childhood professionals received direct assistance from the Endorsement Coordinator
- 713 professionals participated in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and Reflective Practice trainings
- 120 hours of Reflective Supervision/Consultation provided

Regional Technical Assistance and Iowa Training Project for Child Care Nurse Consultants (CCNCs)

Project Overview: Child Care Nurse Consultants (CCNC) are registered nurses who provide visits, consultation, training, and technical assistance to early childhood care and education providers. Child care and early education businesses contact CCNCs about health and safety policies, infectious disease prevention, medication management, health of personnel, specific child health or safety issues, and care planning for children with special health needs.

The Regional TA Team of experienced CCNCs, the Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI) Coordinator and the HCCI Professional Development Nurse Clinician provide support and mentoring to local CCNCs. They also make Quality Rating System (QRS) visits and provide DHS approved training gap filling in counties without CCNC access and precept nurses enrolled in the Iowa Training Project for Child Care Nurse Consultants (ITPCCNC). ITPCCNC is based on the National Training Institute (NTI) for Child Care Health Consultation model and incorporates NTI and Iowa specific materials.

This project supports the following activities outlined in:

- **Child Care Nurse Consultant Role Guidance FY20:**
 - COMPETENCY 1A. Understands the role of the CCNC
 - COMPETENCY 2A. Uses evidence-based instruments to assess the quality of health, safety, and wellness practices in ECE programs
- **Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan:**
 - Goal 1: Maintain and Promote a Solid Infrastructure to Advance the Early Childhood System
 - Strategy 1.2: Foster partnerships and advance collaborations among all stakeholders that focus on policy, system guidance and advocacy to educate and improve collaboration.
 - Goal 2: Ensure Equitable Access to High Quality Services for Young Children and their Families
 - Strategy 2.1: Using data and program standards, identify, invest and implement evidence based services, programs and activities across the early childhood system

Project Deliverables

In FY20 state ECI PD funds (\$78,500.00), Preschool Development Grant (\$20,000.00) federal funds, local ECI areas, and the Iowa Department of Human Services supported statewide CCNC efforts primarily focused on health and safety guidance, in-person and virtual training, and coaching supports for child care programs. This project also supported the Playground Supervision and Sun Safety Train-the-Trainer event for CCNCs. Due to COVID-19 on-site child care visit restrictions, CCNC inter-rater reliability visits were unable to be completed for FY20.

HCCI CCNC FY20 Year End Performance Measure Data

- 34 Child Care Nurse Consultants covering 99 counties
- 1,759 child care programs participating with a CCNC with 95% improving in health and safety
- 42% of child care programs statewide participating with CCNCs (up from 37%)
- 3,082 child care visits (face to face and virtual) completed
- 9,113 technical assistance provided
- 680 children with special health needs identified, 91% with a care plan in place
- Total # of trainings by CCNCs = 128 (face to face and virtual)
- Total child care providers trained = 1,483
- 6 nurses successfully completed ITPCCNC, all receiving precepting by the regional TA Team
- 100% of ITPCCNC participants reporting good to excellent for preparing them for the CCNC role
- 32 CCNCs attended the Playground Supervision and Sun Safety Train-the-Trainer virtual event provided by the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)
- 90% of participants reporting confidence in providing the Playground Supervision and Sun Safety Training to child care programs

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA is a comprehensive, evidence-based 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 Iowa's children.

T.E.A.C.H. supports the professional development of the early and education workforce in the state, contributing to healthy, safe, and quality early learning environments for Iowa's youngest citizens.

During this contract year, T.E.A.C.H. has been supported by multiple funding sources. In addition to ECI State PD funds (\$120,000) and Preschool Development Grant funds (\$250,000), T.E.A.C.H. receives support from the Iowa Department of Human Services through federal funding from the Child Care Development Fund; United Way of Central Iowa, Women's Leadership Connection; the Iowa Department of Public Health through MIECHV funds; Polk County ECI; Iowa River Valley ECI; and the child care programs who co-sponsor a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient.

FY20 Highlights

- 93% T.E.A.C.H. recipients retained employment in their child care programs
- 76 degrees and credentials earned (11 associate degrees, 21 bachelor's degrees, and 44 CDAs)
- 367 recipients progressed towards their educational goals
- 2,941 credits earned by T.E.A.C.H. recipients toward degree completion
- 3.6 average GPA for T.E.A.C.H. recipients
- 11% average wage increase

For the full T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA report, visit <http://www.iowaaec.org/teach-annual-report.cfm>

Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA

Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA provides education-based financial awards to those in the early care and education workforce in order to improve retention, compensation and education levels of those working with children ages birth to five years old.

WAGE\$ is more than just a wage supplement. Each recipient is paired with a counselor who helps them navigate the WAGE\$ program and encourages their continued education. In addition to those participating in the program, WAGE\$ also serves as an incentive for other staff at qualifying programs to consider increasing their education level and for programs not yet eligible to take steps to increase their level of quality and/or begin serving low-income children.

During this contract year, WAGE\$ has been supported by multiple funding sources. These include ECI State PD funds (\$55,883.50), Preschool Development Grant funds (\$76,171.00), private foundations, United Ways, local ECI areas, and the Iowa Department of Human Services.

FY20 Highlights

- Over 97% of recipients say that WAGE\$ helps ease financial stress
- Average six-month supplement: \$905.20
- 292 recipients from 167 child care programs received a WAGE\$ supplement

- 26% of recipients at temporary education levels completed additional college coursework
- Over \$400,000 awarded in financial supplements
- 84% retention rate of recipients in their programs

For the full Child Care WAGES[®] IOWA report, visit <http://www.iowaaeyc.org/teach-annual-report.cfm>

Iowa Family Support Credential

The purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program is to improve program quality, provide an outside evaluation perspective and to ensure that family support programs in Iowa represent a deep and abiding commitment to delivering the highest quality services possible to families and children. As the family support initiative continues to grow and expand in our state, quality improvement helps assure that family support will continue to be regarded by the interested public as a quality service, representing a given set of standards.

The Iowa Family Support Credentialing program is intended for programs that do not have access to an external evaluation. The Iowa Family Support Credential is public recognition by the Early Childhood Iowa office and Iowa Department of Public Health that a family support program is following evidence-based practice standards. The Iowa Family Support Credential is awarded to family support programs that complete the peer review process and are found to be in substantial adherence with all of the Iowa Family Support Standards.

The Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program is supported by ECI professional development funds (\$160,000) and the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting funds. A partnership between the ECI State Office and the Iowa Department of Public Health created and support this program since its inception.

FY20 Highlights

- 12 peer reviews conducted for 16 programs
- 94% of standards found in adherence at conclusion of peer review
- 103 programs currently credentialed through Iowa Family Support Credential and Alternate Iowa Family Support Credential
- Implemented policy to allow peer reviews to take place virtually during FY21

Early Childhood – Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS)

The mission of the EC-PBIS State Leadership Team is to develop the state infrastructure so that all early care, health and education providers successfully implement the Pyramid Model of positive behavior supports with fidelity (\$89,000 ECI State PD funds). Early Childhood-Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS), the Pyramid Model initiative in Iowa, offers early childhood programs a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to promoting social-emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors among young children. EC-PBIS creates nurturing environments for children

equipped with supported staff trained to respond to challenging behaviors. This is all for the goal of fostering positive mental health at a young age.

In FY20, the EC-PBIS State Leadership team revitalized the infrastructure of EC-PBIS awareness and stages of implementation through planning awareness, training, coaching and supports to be launched via the new mental health page within ECI's hub of resources; now available via

<https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/mental-health>

Early Childhood Professional Development Coordination

ECI Professional Development Coordination and strategic plan implementation coordination was supported with \$38,150.81 in ECI State PD funds and \$156,600.00 Preschool Development Grant funds to promote a system of integrated supports for early childhood professionals that empower them to improve the quality of services provided to young children and their families; respond to the lack of essential resources; and collaborate with the Early Childhood Iowa system to revise policies that connect professional development activities to support effective implementation of a statewide coordinated system.

The primary responsibility of coordination is support of the ECI Professional Development (PD) Group annual plan, aligned to the *"We are ECI" Strategic Plan 2019-2022*. The ECI PD Executive Committee, the PD Early Learning Leadership Team; the PD Health, Mental Health, Nutrition Leadership Team; and coordination with the Family Support Leadership Group meet quarterly to share strategic plan implementation progress with small group meetings frequently throughout the year focused on implementation activities.

FY20 Highlights:

- Revision of the Quality Professional Development Measures and Adult Educator Competencies documents
- Development of the Iowa Early Learning Standards/Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework/Teaching Strategies GOLD® Assessment (IELS/ELOF/GOLD) Crosswalk, and the Coaching/Technical Assistance Competencies document
- Provision of support to the Iowa Preschool Development Grant Core Committee, the Iowa Early Childhood Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (Iowa Department of Education), and the Child Development Associate® credential by high school workgroup (Iowa AEYC)
- Provision of training sessions of the Iowa Early Learning Standards Orientation throughout the state