



2022  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
HIGHLIGHTS

# GOVERNOR REYNOLDS AND MEMBERS OF THE IOWA LEGISLATURE:

The Early Childhood Iowa State Board is pleased to share this year's annual report. As we move forward from the effects from the pandemic, the ECI State Board is proud of both the parents of young children, but also the multitude of individuals that work for agencies that in some way impact the life of a young child. Services were never stopped and continued adapted to best meet the needs.

In FY '22, Iowa's early childhood system strives to increase alignment to provide services that best prepare children for school and life. With the Governor's support and aligning with the Child Care Task Force Recommendations, ECI and DHHS partnered together to begin a statewide effort to strengthen business supports for child care businesses. Two contracted vendors were established to strengthen child care management system options along with financial management consultants to provide direct technical assistance.

The state of early child care in Iowa is good...not great but improving. The ECI Board continues to find efficiencies through grant funding, public-private partnerships, and pursuing integrated data management (I2D2). We are working with our ECI area boards and collaborators to strengthen our support for Iowa's most precious resource and future workforce. We stand ready with the Governor and the Iowa Legislative Assembly to make Iowa's early care, health and education childhood system the gateway to future economic growth and prosperity.

Respectfully,



Aaron Johnson  
Early Childhood Iowa State Board Chair

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View the full report at [earlychildhood.iowa.gov/annual-reports](https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/annual-reports)

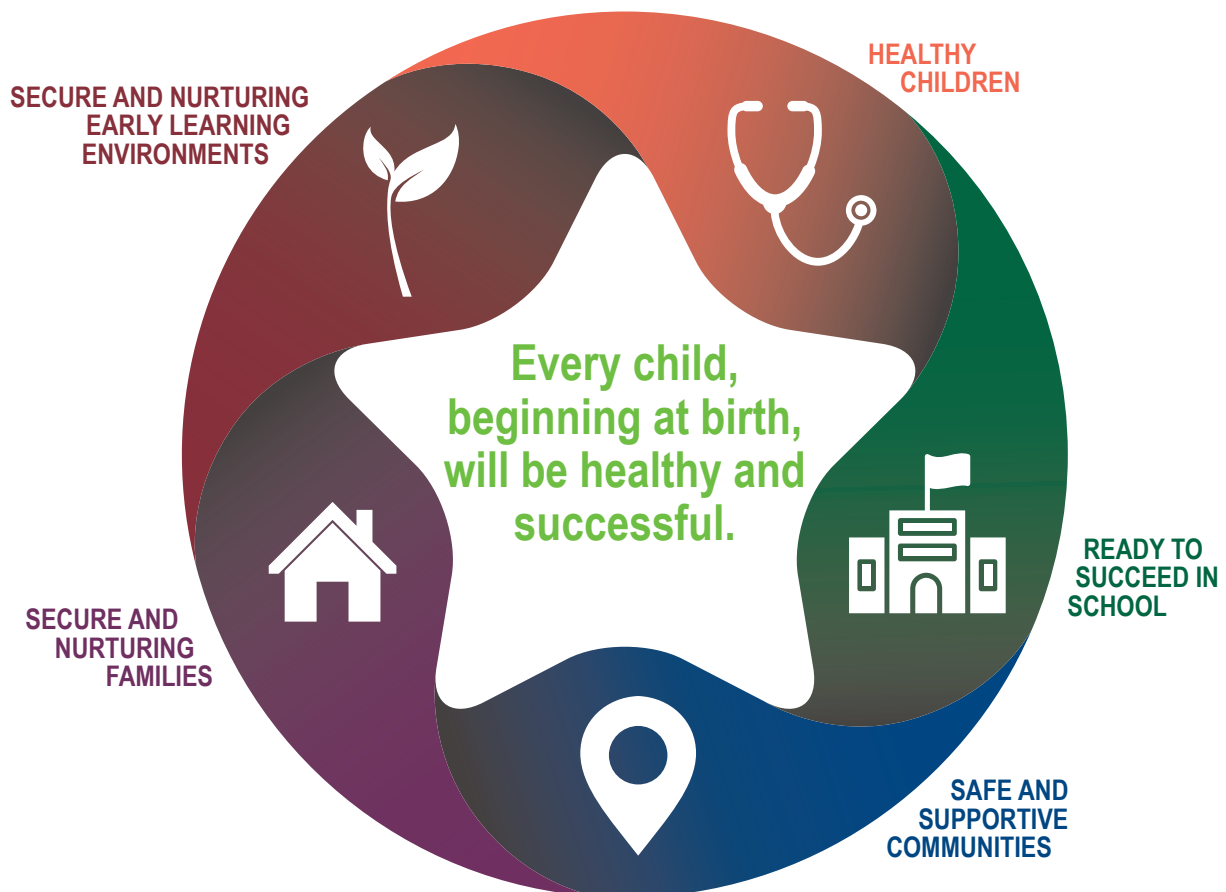




# OUR VISION FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN

*"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-four 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**



Child Care Nurse Consultants (CCNC) incorporate principles of health equity when working with early childhood care and education programs; providing consultation, training, technical assistance, information and referral as well as care planning for children with special health needs. The CCNC program is evidence-based and helps to ensure that children have access to healthy and safe care.

**2,359** child care programs received Child Care Nurse Consultant Services (CCNC), up 9% from FY21

**802** children with special health needs received a care plan from a CCNC, up 57% from FY21

**14,446** technical assistance contacts were made to child care programs were provided (up almost 10% from FY21)

**\$1,654,001.07** invested to support health and safety practices in child care at a local level

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



Family support programs include home visiting programs or group-based parent education that are designed to strengthen protective factors, including: parenting skills, increasing parental knowledge of child development, and increasing family functioning and problem solving skills.

**Models:** Healthy Families America (HFA), Home-based Early Head Start, Family Connects, Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and locally developed promising practice models meeting the Iowa Family Support Credential standards. Delivered by Nationally Credentialed Family Support Professionals

**92%** of families served were able to improve or maintain their healthy functioning, problem-solving or communication skills.

**71%** of children from families enrolled in family support programs were screened for developmental milestones utilizing the Ages and Stages (ASQ-3) questionnaire; an increase from 58% in FY21

**5,634** families served **52,597** home visits

**65%** of families served had a primary caregiver with a high school education or less

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



**3,281** families received early literacy support and developmentally appropriate books for their children, ages 0-5, from local area boards financially partnering with their local libraries

**428** children received safe and reliable transportation to their early learning program who otherwise would not had access to early childhood programming

## 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.

**236,146 +** children ages birth through age five need every community's dedication to their first 2,000 days (2021, Woods and Poole Population Estimate)

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



**\$378,434.89** invested to provide start-up, expansion, business education, or quality improvement activity grants to child care businesses.

\*For a full data report to see how Iowa is doing, check out the Statewide Indicators report at <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/document/eci-fy22-annual-report>



## ECI HIGHLIGHT

# GROWING IOWA'S FUTURE

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 youngest children and their families.

### ECI Works for Iowa

- Coordinating statewide and local systems
- Increasing access to early childhood services through gap filling and coordination of resources
- Building systems of supports for early childhood programs and services
- Increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood years (0-5)
- Promoting evidence-based programs that increase quality of services to children and families
- Comprehensive planning for early childhood systems
- Collaborating across early care, education, and health systems for the benefit of young children
- Brings together a variety of perspectives to problem-solve
- Engages citizens in finding solutions to local problems

### Our Strengths

- Integrated Data System
- Private-Public Collaboration and Partnerships
- Small and efficient State Coordination Office
- Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards are the local connections to the state system
- Flexibility to respond to emerging issues that impact young children and their families

## Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards

Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human services programs on behalf of young children, families, and other citizens residing in the area. The focus is to improve results for families with young children, ages 0-5 years.

There are 38 Early Childhood Iowa areas statewide representing all 99 counties. Each area has a citizen-led board that promotes collaboration, leverages private partnerships, implements programs and develops systems.

## Responsive

**ECI Area Boards have the ability to fill gaps and act swiftly.**

- The Stratford Early Learning Center used the bonuses to avert closure and add four children to care by increasing the number of hours worked per quarter by 744.5.
- The Mighty Trojan Daycare used the sign on and retention bonuses to recruit a new staff member who cares for 8 additional children.
- The Riverview Early Childhood Center used the bonus to increase the number of hours worked per quarter by 738 hours allowing them to bring on 24 additional children.
- Webster City Daycare used the bonus to increase the number of hours worked per quarter by a remarkable 2262 hours allowing them to bring on 56 additional children.



Riverview Early Childhood Center would like to thank the Hamilton County Child Care Initiative (via the local ECI Area, Building Families), community, businesses, groups, individuals and all those involved for their generous donations to the Hamilton County Child Care Bonus Program. The Bonus program has helped Riverview hire new staff (10) and retain our current staff (12). We have also been able to open up 24 new childcare slots since we have the staffing to allow for that. I am excited to share that at this time Riverview is at full capacity, which hasn't happened for a very long time. With the continued support of the Hamilton County Child Care Initiative, community, businesses, groups & individuals we hope to retain our current staff and continue to add to enrollment each year."

– ROSIE MESSERLEY



Webster City Daycare Center is grateful to be a part of a partnership program by Building Families, an Early Childhood Iowa Area Board, the Enhance Hamilton County Foundation, Hamilton County, the City of Webster City, Van Diest Supply Co., and dozens of other employers and individuals. The retention bonus that our staff receives plays a large role in their ability (financially) to continue employment with the daycare. In the past six months, Webster City Daycare has been able to welcome 18 new children to our center. This would not be possible without the generous people in our community doing what they can to make the lives of our hard working childcare providers just a little bit easier."

– HILLARY LANG



*Above: Breaking ground celebration for the 2023 Greater Connections Child Development Center in Creston, Iowa.*

*Right: The Children's Center's ribbon cutting ceremony was held on November 13, 2022.*



### Ability to Leverage Private Funds

ECI Area Boards have connections with their communities that enable them to engage with partners and secure funding for projects.

- Linking Families and Communities (Calhoun, Pocahontas, & Webster counties) invested in a child care market study and architectural design in Webster County that resulted in an investment of \$1.5 million through private-public partnerships which added 56 child care spaces to Community Early Childhood Center in Fort Dodge.
- In Jefferson, Iowa a child care center had been in existence for seventeen years but needed updates to better serve children. In the fall of 2022, the center, The Children's Center, was moved and re-established to now care for up to 148 children. This project was made possible thanks to the support from the local school, city, county, state, foundations, economic development, community members, banks and businesses who also financially supported the efforts with checks from \$5,000 to \$500,000. The local ECI Area, Partnerships 4 Families, provided the initial funding for the architect at The Children's Center.

### Unite Local People

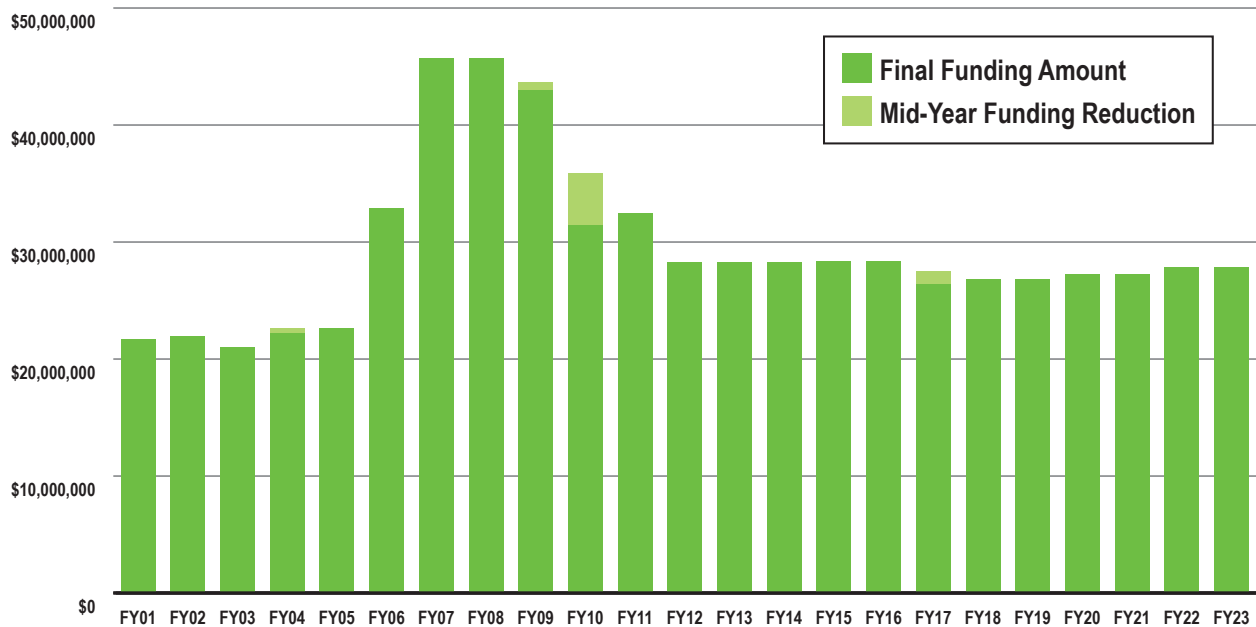
ECI Area Boards, governed by local people, understand the local needs and issues. They have the unique ability to unite their local communities toward a common goal or action.

- Quad Counties 4 Kids Early Childhood Area (Adams, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union counties) united local business and community partners to address the child care desert in Union County. This action led to businesses donating land, funds, and employment services for a new child care center in Creston which will be completed in June 2023. The Greater Connections Childhood Development Center will have the space to serve up to 175 children.





# ECI FUNDING HISTORY



'SFY'99 - 29 counties funded  
 SFY'00 - 98 counties funded  
 SFY'01 - 99 counties funded  
 SFY'04 - 2.5% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding; .25% funding restored before the end of the fiscal year (adjusted decrease in funding of \$294,305.50)  
 SFY'09 - 1.5% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$524,135.60)  
 SFY'10 - \$500,000 mid-year reduction in Early Childhood funding; 10% mid-year reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$3,015,369)  
 SFY'11 - At the close of the 2010 legislative session, SF2366 signed into law making appropriations to backfill SFY'10 School Ready Preschool funding  
 SFY'15 - Early Childhood funds - DHS reduced the amount withheld from the appropriation for the TA team member  
 SFY'17 - 3.75% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$824,994)

# IMPLEMENTING ECI'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022



## FY21 Strategic Plan Achievements

To promote the vision for a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services, the Early Childhood Iowa initiative empowers individuals, communities, and state level partners to achieve the desired results via a statewide strategic plan. The desired results will be achieved as private and public entities work collaboratively. The role of the Early Childhood Iowa State board, 38 area boards, and other state and local government agencies is to provide support, leadership, and facilitation of the growth of individual, community, and state responsibility in addressing the strategic plan.



## GOAL 1

Promote a coordinated infrastructure to advance the early childhood system.

Increased data sharing agreements across agencies, with Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (<https://i2d2.iastate.edu/>) as a business partner, to integrate data for approved system inquiries to support data-based decision making.

Developed an IA Data Dashboard (<https://i2d2.iastate.edu/ia-data-drive/>) to provide state and county-level data to visually show results aligned with multiple ECI indicators.

Public and private partnerships grew across local areas via community collaboration. Refer to the FY22 Growing Iowa's Future annual report highlights.

ECI Monthly Musings reached 4,000+ subscribers.



## GOAL 2

**Build public will for investing in young children and families.**

Early childhood advocacy groups strengthened their alignment by joining as a collective via the Iowa Child Care Coalition.

Over 2,000 family survey responses from November 2021 – February 2022 (utilized to inform our statewide needs assessment and strategic plan).

Iowa communities continued to build awareness of the importance of child care within their communities. An active Shared Services Co-Design Team met monthly from February through July to inform current and future supports for child care businesses.



## GOAL 3

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

Expanded T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood @ IOWA and Child Care WAGE\$ @ IOWA (supported higher education attainment with stipends based on achieved education levels).

Moving the Needle on Compensation recommendations to support the child care workforce.

In FY22, 89 family support professionals earned the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals National Credential. A total of 371 family support professionals have earned the credential through this reporting period.

Expanded Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS) training and coaching for the early childhood workforce.



## GOAL 4

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

Provided access to prenatal care via family support services and pilot programs such as Nine to Thrive. This program helps support the healthy development of your baby during pregnancy by identifying risks and providing a support system. This partnership between prenatal healthcare providers allows for a confidential connection to family support services within the community. [www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/families/nine2thrive](http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/families/nine2thrive)

Continued investments into the Child Care Assistance program with local incentives for child care businesses to enroll eligible children.

Contracted with Opportunities Exchange to develop a strategic plan for supporting Iron Triangle metrics for child care business growth and sustainability: full enrollment, revenues cover per-child cost, and full fee collection ([https://www.oppex.org/s/OppEx\\_2021\\_IronTriangle.pdf](https://www.oppex.org/s/OppEx_2021_IronTriangle.pdf))



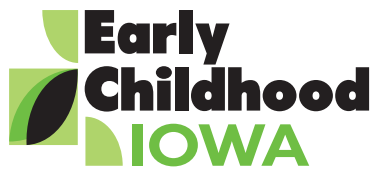
## GOAL 5

**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.**

Collaboration of early childhood system stakeholders, partnering agencies including leadership from Department of Health and Human Services, and child care providers via the Quality Rating System Oversight Team, led to the launch of Iowa's Quality for Kids (IQ4K): Building quality environments one block at a time. A continuous improvement approach for child care environments.

Investments were made to support facility needs of child care businesses and alignments were made with the Governor's Child Care Task Force Report to strategically implement child care business growth and sustainability plans.

Regional mental health collaborations continue to grow and the use of developmentally appropriate screening tools for children, birth through age five, grow in supporting referrals to early prevention and intervention services.



STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
**Health AND Human**  
SERVICES

## Annual Report Highlights 2022

Iowa Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Office of Early Childhood Iowa  
[earlychildhood.iowa.gov](http://earlychildhood.iowa.gov)

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