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Report on Survey of Iowa
School Districts Providing
Child Care Services

REPORT ON SURVEY OF IOWA SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PROVIDING CHILD CARE SERVICES

Commission on Children, Youth and Families
and
Department of Education

Prepared by
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Department of Child Development
Iowa State University

During April, 1987, a survey was conducted jointly by the Commission on Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Education to gather information about the availability of child care services in schools across the state of Iowa.

I. METHODS

A short survey instrument was developed, containing six yes/no questions about the provision of child care for pre-school, kindergarten, before/after school care for elementary children; over holiday periods; if there were costs to parents; and if provisions were made for low income families. The seventh item asked for the number of buildings used, and the eighth item asked for comments (Appendix A contains the survey instrument).

This questionnaire with a cover memo to all local school superintendents was sent to each of the 436 school districts in Iowa (Appendix B). Copies were sent to mailing lists of Iowa school board members, superintendents of area community colleges and technical schools, area education agency (AEA) administrators. An additional "mailbag" list of recipients included administrators of private religious schools, private and public colleges, education/certification faculty at the three Regents Universities, state institutions and schools, professional education and administration associations, mental health institutes, education inservice coordinators of state departments, PTA's. All together, 589 questionnaires were issued, and 331 were returned. Of the 436 sent to school districts, 324 were returned with a response rate of 74.3 percent. Questionnaires were returned during May and June. Data were analyzed in August and September, 1987.

II. RESULTS

A. Response Summary

Table 1 shows that 76 percent of the 324 respondents indicated that they were providing no services, and they offered no comments. Respondents from twenty districts indicated that they were providing services; 57 districts responded that they were not providing services, but they offered relevant comments which will be presented in this report.

Table 1. School district response to survey

	n	%
Total Iowa districts	436	
Districts responding	324	76.2
Districts offering services	20	6.2
Districts offering comments	57	17.6

B. Services Offered by School Districts

As can be seen in Figure 1, twenty school districts indicated that they were providing child care services, and, of these, nineteen districts offered programs for school-agers. In addition, eight of the programs indicated they were providing care for kindergarteners, and seven reported programs for preschoolers.

Figure 2 presents the range of programs within the twenty school districts. Forty-seven percent provided care for one age group only (school-age or kindergarten), and the other 53 percent for two or three age groups.

Seventy percent of districts providing services made them available over school vacation periods. Eighteen of the twenty districts charged parents for

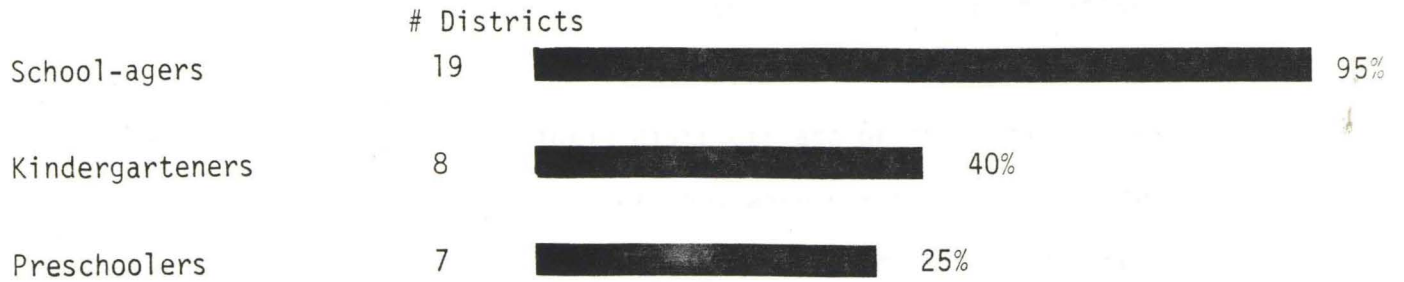


Figure 1. Child Care Provided in 20 School Districts by Age of Child

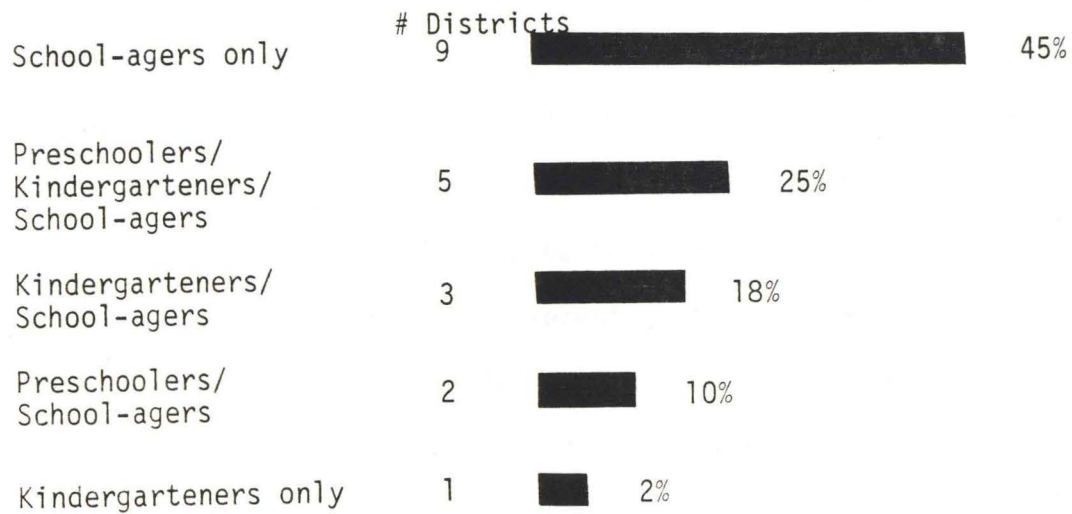


Figure 2. Child Care Provided in 20 School Districts by Program

day care services, and 10 of these districts reported special provisions for low income families. One respondent wrote "scholarships," and a second indicated a purchase of service contract with Department of Human Services.

In addition to these twenty districts, all of whose respondents indicated that they were offering services, three other districts whose responses were "no" to the first six items indicated in their comments that child care was available in their districts and on their facilities in cooperation with other services. But they were not perceived by the respondents as being "their programs," and therefore, they provided no information about them.

C. Services Offered in Conjunction with Other Agencies

Further examination of the responses of districts either providing services and/or providing comments shows that 17 school districts have cooperative arrangements with other agencies to provide child care and/or other support services for children and families. In fact, of the 20 districts that responded that they do provide child care, eight indicated their services were provided in conjunction with other agencies, including "Y's" and non-profit day care centers. As can be seen in Figure 3, eight programs offered child care, and nine offered different programs for preschool children. Some examples are a half-day, two day a week pre-kindergarten program in one district; another with a half-day five day a week program for children needing pre-kindergarten background enrichment with Chapter I funding.

Respondents from one district indicated a three-way arrangement in which child care is available in a facility at the community college, and the school district contracts with a non-profit day care center for services, and "so far it is very satisfactory."

<u>Cooperative Agency/Program</u>	<u>Number of Districts</u>	
Non-profit Day Care Centers	4	23.5%
"Y's"	3	17.5%
Head Start	3	17.5%
Preschool	2	11.5%
Preschool Special Needs	2	17.5%
Others	3	17.5%

Figure 3. Cooperative Arrangements between School Districts and Other Agencies

D. Facilities Used

Districts that offered child care services were asked how many buildings were used. As can be seen in Table 2, 20 districts responded with a total of

Table 2. Buildings used by school districts providing child care

<u>Number of buildings</u>	<u>Number of school districts</u>
1	14
2	2
3	1
4	1
5	1
6	1

53 buildings. However, from comments offered by some of the respondents, it is evident that these numbers can be most deceptive. Some districts used one building and provided services to children from as many as eight different schools. This information has not been sought on this survey; several districts volunteered comments.

E. Needs Assessments

An additional 7 percent of all districts responding indicated that they had examined or were examining the possibility of providing child care. Respondents from eight districts referred to conducting surveys to assess needs in the communities. One respondent indicated they were running a preschool program as a result of a survey; two districts indicated they had conducted surveys and had identified no need; one district reported they had identified needs and plans were underway for 1988-1989; another district has identified the need but needed funding information. Two districts reported surveys in progress. One district indicated they had tried to start a day care center, but parents were not interested. Respondents from 15 districts commented that they were considering offering services. Of these, five indicated concerns about space, and four identified costs as major concerns.

F. Concerns Expressed

Respondents from 11 districts referred to programs in existence in their communities. Most simply mentioned them. One added, "and there is no need for us to compete." Three respondents indicated "turf" problems with private providers.

"The community has several day care centers. There is a reluctance on the part of these day care center owners to have the school district implement programs for children needing day care. Unfortunately, our present Board of Education is sensitive to this kind of political pressure."

Several respondents presented comments that reflected concerns about four-year-old programs.

"Before you mandate preschool, you should check with each district as to their having any facility to hold a preschool in!"

"The proposed preschool program will mean many districts will have to construct new classrooms; the cost of what will only add to the tax burden now borne by Iowans already experiencing economic distress."

Respondents from 11 districts (3 percent of all respondents) made comments that clearly indicated philosophical opposition to the school providing child care services.

"We feel no need to expand into child care services for children not enrolled in school, or for services after school or vacations. The parents have some responsibility. The schools should not be asked to expand into this area. Let's do a good job with our assigned responsibility without adding more."

"Education is the school's mission--day care should remain a parents' responsibility."

"No need to compete with private day care services. I don't believe this should be a public school responsibility anyway."

"I do not believe this should be the responsibility of a school system."

"Day care should not be a responsibility for schools. Parents need to assume some responsibility for the care of their children."

"The school board feels it is the responsibility of the parents to provide supervision and care for pre-kindergarten children as the school has enough responsibilities."

"Schools should educate children, parents should raise them."

"Keep schools out of day care services. Our job is education."

"Pre-kindergarten programs DO NOT belong in the schools!!!"

"I think we should take these children at age six months and keep them all the way. Why let the parents have any say in the way they are raised?"

"Why not build 'school dorms' and raise these kids from birth?"

G. Services Offered by Others

In addition to the 324 responses received from school district administrators, six other responses were received. Three were from area colleges and schools. One commented:

"I interpreted your questionnaire as a request for information regarding day care services located on the campus or administered by the college. Our students utilize a private facility."

A second college responded that they provided child care services for pre-schoolers, kindergarteners, and school-agers and had been doing so for nine or ten years. They received student senate subsidies and had received a grant to provide evening child care the following year. The third college response indicated a lab day care program for preschoolers as part of the college training program and that these services were available to staff and students. One response from a state funded residential facility indicated that they lease facilities to a state approved day care center which staff can use. Two AEA administrators returned questionnaires with N/A as responses to each item. The last response in this category was received from a Catholic high school in its first year of operating a day care center with 105 children--preschoolers, kindergarteners, and school-agers.

And finally, seven requested copies of the report and positive exclamatory comments from nine respondents included:

"Thanks for doing this; let's have a workshop."

"Get us some grant information, and we'll get going."

III. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey has yielded important information about the availability of child care in Iowa's school districts. It appears that when the survey was

done, there were not very many districts offering child care. Twenty were identified, and there may possibly be others. The response rate would have been higher at another time of the year and if a mail survey program (Dillman) had been used.

Perhaps the most significant finding is that the provision of child care in a state with 436 school districts is a complex issue. In fact, this survey can be viewed as a pilot effort that has located some of the child care services that were available during the 1986-87 school year and identified other kinds of information that should be obtained.

Recommendations

1. This survey be followed by a more indepth study that would consider the following:
 - a. Collecting information during the first 8 months of the school year.
 - b. Following a scientific process (e.g. Dillman) to obtain a higher response rate (90 percent plus).
 - c. Recognizing and identifying the variety of kindergarten program schedules that exist in Iowa when collecting information about child care for kindergarteners.
 - d. Using indicators other than just numbers of buildings to ascertain the size and scope of programs.
 - e. Collecting more detailed information about cooperative arrangements with other agencies.
2. Workshops/seminars for school district administrators be implemented to provide information about funding, use of space, and possibility of cooperative arrangements with other agencies.

3. Develop workshops and other consciousness-raising activities for administrators who have difficulty with the concept of schools providing support services for families.

Appendix A

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

NAME OF PERSON WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY _____ (Phone number) _____

1. Do you provide day care services for children not yet enrolled in school?
Yes ____ No ____
2. Do you provide day care services for children who are enrolled in kindergarten programs that operate for less than a full day?
Yes ____ No ____
3. Do you provide before or after school day care services for other elementary school aged children?
Yes ____ No ____
4. Do you provide day care services during periods of school vacation?
Yes ____ No ____
5. Do you charge for these day care services?
Yes ____ No ____
6. If you do charge for these services, do you make special provisions for low income families?
Yes ____ No ____
7. Please indicate the number of school buildings in which any type of day care services are provided. _____ (number)
8. Are there any comments you wish to make?

COMMENTS:

Please return by May 15, 1987 to:

Carol McDanolds Bradley, Administrator
Instructional Services Division
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

Appendix B

Date: April 24, 1987

To: Local School Superintendents

From: Carol McDanolds Bradley, Administrator
Instructional Services Division
Department of Education

Ann Bradley Thompson, Administrator
Commission on Children, Youth and Families

RE: Survey of Day Care Services Provided by Local School Districts

Please take time to complete the attached survey so that we may have a picture of the availability of day care services in Iowa. Day care provided by school districts is a "piece of the picture" that we do not currently have.

We thank you in advance and ask that you return the survey by May 15, 1987 to: Carol McDanold Bradley
Instructional Services Division
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Sincerely yours,

Carol and Ann

Appendix C

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Tables and figures providing information about school districts
by name.

Table 3. Districts offering child care and their responses

Merged Area	School District	Provides child care for			Vacations	Charge	Provisions for Low Income
		Preschoolers	Kindergarteners	School-Agers			
II	Dumont	*	*	*	*	*	
III	Spencer			*	*	*	*
IX	Maquoketa	*	*	*	*	*	
X	North Scott	*	*	*	*	*	*
X	Amana	*		*	*	*	
X	College	*		*	*	*	
X	Cedar Rapids			*		*	
X	Iowa City			*		*	*
X	Iowa Valley	*	*	*	*	*	*
X	Linn Mar			*	*	*	
X	Olin		*				
XI	Ankeny		*	*	*	*	*
XI	Des Moines Ind.		*	*		*	*
XI	Newton			*		*	*
XI	Saydel	*	*	*	*	*	
XI	United			*	*	*	*
XI	Urbandale		*	*	*	*	*
XI	West Des Moines			*	*	*	
XII	Sioux City			*			
XV	Ottumwa			*	*	*	*

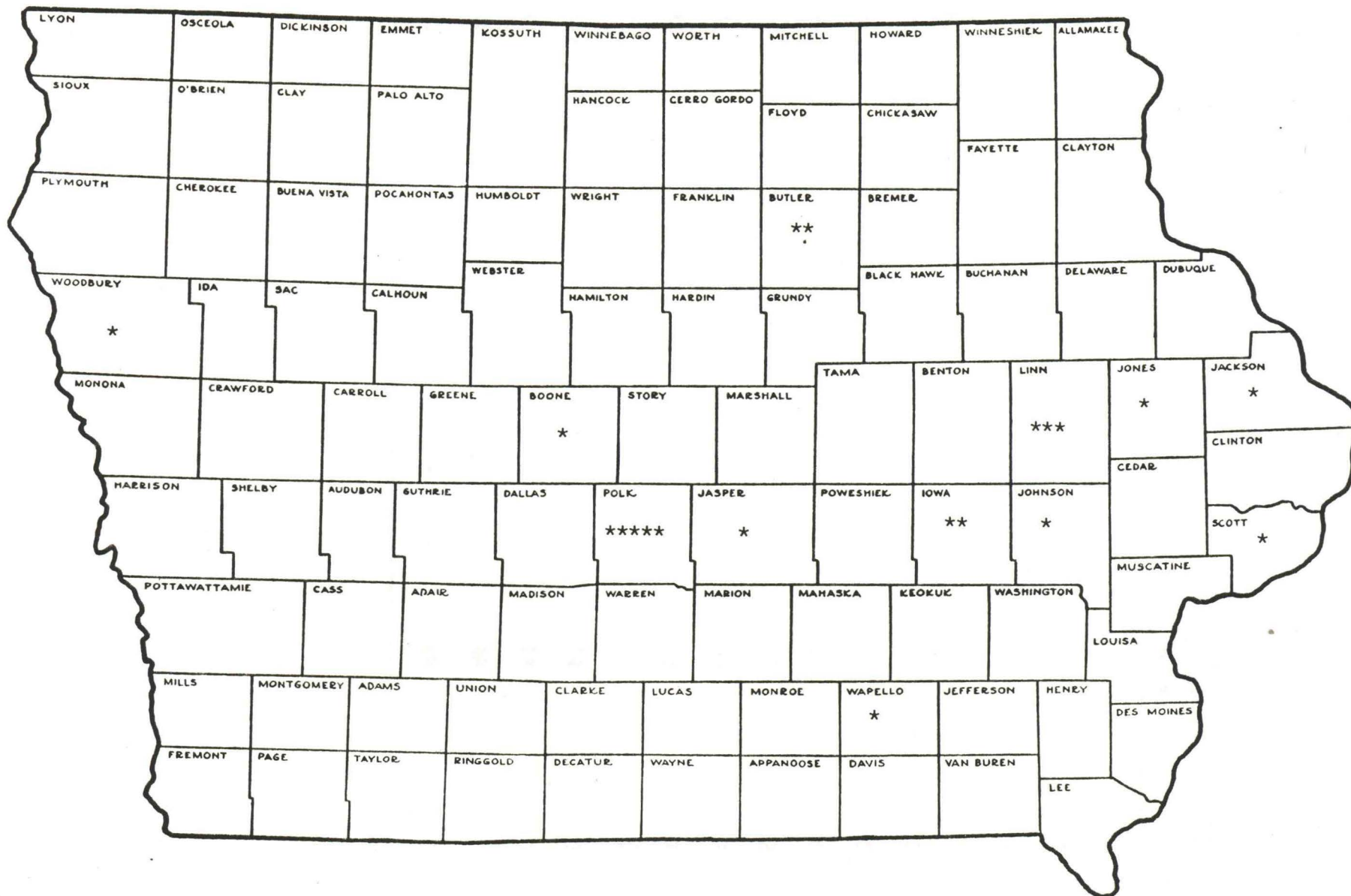


Figure 4. Location of School Districts Offering Child Care, by County

*School Districts

Table 4. School districts responding to survey and those offering child care by merged area

Merged Area	Total Number of School Districts	Number Responding to Survey	Percent Responding to Survey	Number Offering Child Care
I	26	20	77	0
II	28	22	79	1
III	25	18	72	1
IV	19	13	68	0
V	45	26	57	0
VI	21	14	66	0
VII	26	17	65	0
IX	24	18	75	2
X	39	33	85	7
XI	61	48	78	7
XII	28	25	89	1
XIII	33	21	64	0
XIV	22	17	17	0
XV	26	33	88	1
XVI	13	9	69	0

Appendix C

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Table 3. Responses to Items in Survey/Responding Districts

Figure 4. Map of Location of School Districts Offering Child Care

Table 4. School Districts Offering Care by Merged Area

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