

Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

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ECI Hosts Successful 15th Annual Early Childhood Iowa Congress

The 15th annual Early Childhood Iowa Congress attracted more than 400 participants from around the state, including individuals from state government, local empowerment, Head Start programs, Title V agencies, Area Education Agencies, to convene in Ames, Iowa on November 13-14, 2007. For the first time, the oversight of the Congress fell to Iowa's system building effort, Early Childhood Iowa.

In a departure from earlier years, the Congress focused on specific outcomes that would address leadership in the field, and emphasis that was articulated in the theme: *Leadership for a New Iowa: Two Days of Conversations, Communication and Collaboration*.

The event began with a keynote address from Karen Ponder, the former president of North Carolina's SmartStart initiative. She shared the eight key strategies that helped North Carolina build an early childhood system that has achieved national recognition. Her eight strategies included:

1. Create a professional development strategy.
2. Build statewide systems to provide salary supplements and supports to reduce workforce turnover
3. Ensure strong local leadership
4. Develop a child care rating systems that include incentives
5. Ensure access to health services for all children
6. Develop a comprehensive, well-coordinated system of child care resource and referral
7. Build your pre-kindergarten program on what is already working in the state.
8. Invest in early childhood leadership and governance.

She ended by reminding participants of the old Chinese Proverb: One generation plants the tree; another gets the shade.

Following the first day of the conference Iowa Community Empowerment hosted a 10-Year Celebration with special guests, reminiscences and video testimonials. Following the celebration, Every Child Counts, an Iowa-based advocacy group announced its launch of a new website that gathers information about how presidential candidates are addressing early childhood issues. More information is available at: <http://www.itsaboutourkids.org/>.

The Wednesday keynote address was provided by Luis Hernandez, an early childhood education specialist at Western Kentucky University. Luis provided food for thought around working with new immigrant families and their children, including economic and political reasons for immigration; the impact on family life; the strength and resilience of language and culture, and the opportunities and contributions of new populations. He reminded participants about how understanding stories of our own family provide insight into how to appreciate new immigrants, their struggles and reasons for immigrating.

~Continued on Page 4 – ECI Congress

Disclaimer:
Many articles in this newsletter are submitted by various entities. The views and opinions contained within may or may not be those of Iowa Community Empowerment.

Update October – November 2007

Links to Empowerment Web sites:

State Empowerment site:
www.empowerment.state.ia.us

Association for Iowa's Children:
www.iowaschildren.org

Local Empowerment web sites are also available on the state web site. Go to the Local Areas tab and click on Map.

Adair County
www.adairempowerment.org

Benton County
www.bcempowerment.com

Black Hawk
www.cedarvalleypromise.org

Buchanan Delaware Fayette
www.bdfempowerment.org

Cedar www.empowercedarco.org

Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Worth
www.cghwempowerment.com

Dallas
www.co.dallas.ia.us/Comm_Services/Empowerment.asp

Des Moines/Louisa
www.caringcommunityempowerment.org

Dubuque
www.empowerdubuque.org

Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell
www.fmcpowerment.com

HAWC (Howard, Allamakee, Winneshiek, Clayton)
www.HAWC-Iowa.com

Hardin www.empowerhardin.com/

Henry www.healthymccurtain.org

Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright
www.buildingfamilies.net

Jasper
<http://www.jaspercountyempowerment.org/>

Johnson
<http://www.jcempowerment.org>

Linn
www.linncountycommunityempowerment.org

Madison *NEW*
www.madisoncountyhelp.org

Marshall
www.youthandviolence.org

Muscatine
www.muscatineempowerment.org

PAK (Palo Alto, Kossuth)
www.pakempowermt.com

Pocahontas, Calhoun and Webster
www.linking-families.com

Polk www.hspa.org

Scott
www.scottcountyempowerment.org

Story www.storycountyfamily.org

Warren
www.warrenempowerment.org

Washington
www.empowerwashington.org

Woodbury www.siouxlandship.org

Early Care, Health and Education System Building Activities

- System-level Professional Development meeting – October 1
- Legislative Interim Committee Preparation – October 1
- IDPH Fall Conference – October 2-3
- Fiscal Accountability Workgroup – October 4, November 1
- Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Co-Chairs meeting – October 4, November 2
- ECI – Public Engagement workgroup meeting – October 4, November 1
- Every Child Counts Legislative Reception – October 8
- Community Partnerships for Protecting Children Conference – October 8
- Home-Based Child Care Legislative Interim Committee – October 10, Nov 21
- Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children Conference – Oct 11-13
- Early Childhood Summit with Pre-K Now – October 17
- Child Care Resource & Referral Trainers ICN – October 17
- Born Learning Parent Education Advisory Meeting – October 18
- ECI Governance & Administration Workgroup meeting – October 18, Nov 15
- ECI Congress Planning – October 19, November 9
- Every Child Counts Advocacy Meeting – October 19
- Midwest Government Performance Conference presentation, Rochester, MN – October 22-23
- Empowerment Director's Meeting – October 24
- Leadership in Action meeting – October 24-25 & November 28-29
- Early ACCESS Governor's Report preparation – October 29
- ECI Quality Services & Programs Issue Brief Committee – October 30
- Legislative Interim Committee, Evidence-based Practices – October 31, Nov 26
- State Child Care Advisory Council – November 1
- ECI Resources & Funding, Fiscal Assessment Workgroup – November 5
- ECI Congress – November 13 & 14
- Community Empowerment 10-Year Celebration Event – November 13
- ECI Parent Web site Planning meeting – November 15
- Council for Early ACCESS – November 16
- Empowerment Coordinator's Training Update – November 19
- Review of Marketing Proposals for Private/Public Partnerships – Nov 19
- Business Advisory Council Meeting – November 29
- TEACH Advisory Committee meeting – November 29
- Early Childhood Summit – November 30
- Family Support Leadership meeting – November 30
- Empowerment orientation with Director Buck & Joe Walsh, IWD - August 27
- School Readiness content conference call - August 27
- Rule-making Process Class - August 28
- Professional Development Contract Negotiation with DHR for Cultural Competency - August 28
- Professional Development Contract Negotiation for Maternal Depression Screening - August 28

**Upcoming Events
Calendar at a Glance**

**Train the Trainer Maternal
Depression Screening**
December 7, 2007 &
March 6, 2008
Des Moines
lisa-segre@uiowa.edu

**Early Childhood Iowa
Stakeholders**
December 11, 2007
Johnston Public Library
Johnston

**Empowerment
Coordinators/Contacts Meetings**
December 12, 2007
Rising Sun Church of Christ
Pleasant Hill

**Early Childhood Iowa Day on the
Hill**
February 14, 2007
State Capitol
Des Moines
www.earlychildhoodiowa.org

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Conference
April 21-22, 2008
Sheraton Conference Center
West Des Moines
www.pcaiowa.org

Site Visits/Technical Assistance Activities

Redesignation Visits

- Henry County – October 2
- Washington County – October 2
- Benton County – October 3
- Iowa County – October 3
- Harrison, Monona, Shelby Empowerment – October 4
- Marion County – October 8
- Jasper County – October 8
- Mahaska, Wapello Empowerment – October 10
- Jefferson, Keokuk Empowerment – October 10
- Ida County – October 16
- Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment – October 17
- Tama County – October 17
- Poweshiek County – October 17
- Dallas County – October 19
- Des Moines/Louisa Empowerment – October 23
- Cedar County – October 23
- Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Worth Empowerment – October 24
- Wayne County – October 31
- Madison County – November 1

Other On-Site Technical Assistance

- Pottawattamie County, Results-based Accountability training – October 24
- Johnson County, Conflicts of Interest Conversation – November 1
- Clinton, Jackson Empowerment (conference call with board) – November 19
- Winnebago County – November 19
- Cherokee County TA – November 20

Annual Report Reviews

- Fremont/Page (Corner Counties) Empowerment – November 19

Linkages/Outreach Activities

- 3-4-5 Thrive Training – October 18
- Youth Development Steering Committee – October 31

Welcome, Marcus!



Meet New State Technical Assistance Team Member

Marcus Johnson represents the Iowa Department of Public Health on the State Technical Assistance Team. He has been employed by the Iowa Department of Public Health-Bureau of Family Health since 2002. Marcus is the Child and Adolescent Reporting System (CAREs) Coordinator and provides technical assistance to local maternal and child health agencies. Marcus received his BS degree in Child and Family Services in 2002 and is currently pursuing his MPA, both from Iowa State University.

ECHE System Building Updates



2008 Day on the Hill

Quality Counts!

Iowa Early Care, Health, & Education Day on the Hill

Thursday, February 14, 2008

State Capitol and Wallace Building

The Day on the Hill will be one of the most visible opportunities for advocates to make their case for investing in Iowa's young children.

You are encouraged to make appointments with your legislators prior to arriving at the Capitol. For more information on who your legislators are and how to contact them, go to www.legis.state.ia.us.

If you would like to attend, please register by no later than February 4th to ensure materials will be available for all participants. A registration form can be found at the following link: <http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/advocacy/index.html>.

For questions about Day on the Hill please contact Jenny Hodges @ jhodges@idph.state.ia.us or Kelly Schulte @ kschulte@idph.state.ia.us.

~ECI Congress Continued from Page 1



Keynote Speaker, Luis Hernandez with Tom Rendon & Barb Merrill

In a breakout following the keynote, Luis and the audience raised a number of issues that need to be addressed to make Iowa more responsive to the needs of immigrant families, including:

- Better support for second language acquisition
- A strong system of certified interpreters so children are not put into the position of interpreting in inappropriate contexts
- Be proactive in developing a diverse workforce
- Address housing issues
- Include diversity within early childhood curriculum

Participants were also treated to 29 separate breakouts covering a wide range of topics in the early care, health and education fields, encouraging more dynamic leadership that advanced quality of services provided to children and families and reaching for even stronger results from our efforts.

The leadership theme ended on a strong note with a panel of local and young leaders discussing the opportunities for leadership in the state, and underscoring the importance of leadership development as a key sustainability strategy in early childhood systems development work.

Join us for our next Early Childhood Iowa Congress in February of 2009.



Karen Ponder shared the keynote address on Tuesday. From left: Kris Bell, Karen Ponder, Shanell Wagler, and Leslie Anderson.



Iowa Empowerment Board News Community Empowerment Celebrates 10 Years

Following the first day of the Early Childhood Iowa Congress, Iowa Community Empowerment hosted a 10-Year Celebration. The event was put together in an effort to celebrate the anniversary of Community Empowerment through sharing family stories, discussion of policy development and a charge for continuing to move forward for all Iowa children. Past and present members of the Iowa Empowerment Board, State Department Directors, Local Empowerment Boards, State Technical Assistance Team Members, members of the Office of Empowerment, Community and Advocacy Organization members, business leaders and families were all present at the celebration. As part of the program, Governor Culver provided a recorded message of support for Community Empowerment. He encouraged the audience with these words, “The Annie E. Casey Foundation rated Iowa as one of the top 5 states to raise a child. I believe as I’m sure you do, Iowa is the best place to raise a child. Community Empowerment and your hard work are some of the reasons why.”



Director Kevin Concannon (DHS) and Iowa Empowerment Board member Darshini Jayawardena

Four family stories were shared, either through video or in person, in which families shared powerful messages of the positive impacts they’ve seen by receiving support from a program that is funded in some way by Community Empowerment. Two members of the Iowa Legislature, Representative Ro Foege and Senator Nancy Boettger provided a historical perspective of why this method of government was created and shared stories of the development of policy for a stronger early childhood system in Iowa. Karen Ponder, from North Carolina’s Smart Start Technical Assistance Center and Lynn Graves, Vice President of Executive Operations at Principal Financial Group reflected upon the strength of the partnerships Iowa has formed through Community Empowerment and the role Iowa business is ready to play in the early care, health and education system. Former Governor Vilsack gave the charge to all in attendance of our responsibility to continue to move forward. He touched upon the many things yet to happen in order to provide a strong support for all young Iowa children prior to entering school, such as the need for continued policy development and financial commitment to provide health care coverage for all Iowa children. Overall, the event presented a collaborative depiction of private/public and local/state partnerships that support our youngest children and families.



Great Food...



Representative Ro Foege shares with the audience.

Great Conversation



From left: former Senator Maggie Tinsman, former Director Mary Mincer Hanson (IDPH), Senator Nancy Boettger, and Representative Jodi Tymeson





Child at Heart Award Presented

Submitted by Cindy Duhrkopf, Partnerships4Families

The 4th Annual Child at Heart Award was presented at the Early Care Health and Education Congress in November by the Association for Iowa's Children. The Child at Heart Award is given to an individual who works toward a better Iowa for children.

This year the Association for Iowa's Children presented the award to Chris McCarron of Dubuque County who has devoted her life to children and their individual learning needs. Chris has worked as a special education teacher and principal at three elementary schools. Chris is a real champion for children's rights and a creator of opportunities for them to reach academic success in spite of factors that might otherwise limit outcomes. In so doing, she has created structures that did not previously exist and worked with local, regional, and national organizations to advocate for and provide experiences to stretch and strengthen children's learning.

In words and actions, Chris lives out her belief that all children have greater potential and possibility than we can know. For her, the finest teaching, strongest parent connections, and most collaborative community partnerships are needed to help children become all that they can be.



Chris McCarron,
2007 Child At Heart Recipient

The Association for Iowa's Children was honored to present the Child at Heart Award to Chris who was nominated by Dubuque County Empowerment. The Association for Iowa's Children is a young organization that was formed to allow Community Empowerment Coordinators across the state a forum to collaborate on behalf of the children in Iowa. It is our goal to find issues that affect all of the Community Empowerment Areas in the state and to speak with one voice on those issues. If you would like more information visit their web site, www.iowaschildren.org.

The Board Room Corner:

Fifth in a Series

Submitted by Janet Gartin,
Family Support Coordinator

Do We Have Quorum?

A lively discussion concerning quorum requirements occurred at the September 2007 empowerment coordinators meeting. The state team stated that the quorum requirement for a local empowerment board was a simple majority of members (50% plus one.) Several local empowerment coordinators disagreed with the statement and asked for a Code citation.

The state team received the following verification from the office of the Iowa Attorney General.

Iowa law defines quorum as follows: “a quorum of a public body is a majority of the members fixed by statute.” Iowa Code Section 4.2(25). According to Roberts Rules of Order, a majority is “more than half.”

A quorum is the minimum attendance—half the members plus one—necessary to conduct business. If a quorum is not present, no business can be transacted. Your by laws can set quorum at a higher percentage but it can not be set lower than a simple majority.

Example for Calculating Quorum:

Smith County empowerment board has a total of 19 board member positions. One position is currently vacant so it is subtracted from the total board member positions to give you a total of a possible 18 board members to participate in your board meeting. Dividing 18 by 2 results in 9 (50% of the active members.) You now need to add one to your total to achieve a simple majority (9 + 1 = 10.) Ten is the minimum number of board members you must have present to achieve quorum and conduct business.

In the absence of a quorum the only action that the board can take is to adjourn the meeting. Keep in mind you must not only establish quorum at the beginning of a meeting – you must maintain it throughout your meeting. When you lose quorum during a meeting the only action you can take is to adjourn the meeting. Please refer to the February 2007 edition of the Empowerment newsletter for more information about quorum.

Early Childhood Public-Private Partnerships

*Beth Jones, Early Childhood
Business Community Liaison*

Iowa's Early Childhood Public-Private Partnerships Forming

In 2006, the Iowa General Assembly established a Business Community Investment Advisory Council to develop recommendations on building a public-private partnership for early childhood in Iowa. Highlights of the report note that business is needed as vested stakeholders in the early care, health and education system. The role of private business can include advocating, informing employees about quality early childhood programs, providing benefits to employees, becoming active in planning the early childhood system and provide business management expertise to child care businesses. As set forth in the recommendations, the public-private partnership will develop a vision and goals, build on current stakeholders, increase public awareness of the investment fund through education and marketing, and enlist business leaders in Iowa's early childhood system.

State funds of \$1 million were set aside to develop the partnership. The recommendations set out a requirement for a dollar for dollar match from statewide business and a local match at forty percent of funds received. The local match can include up to ten percent of in-kind match. Focus areas for the fund include three major priorities: quality child care/early care, health and technology. The funds are to be managed by the Iowa Empowerment Board.

In 2007, the Iowa General Assembly set aside an additional \$1 million for the partnership and adopted the recommendations of the committee. The Iowa Empowerment Board then created the Early Childhood Business Committee to move forward the plan. Committee members will meet on November 29 to discuss strategies to secure statewide match and develop a plan to create an investment fund that demonstrates results for success through concentrating on the focus areas. Once \$250,000 in state match is secured, funds can be distributed through a granting process to local projects that fit the focus areas to be further defined by the committee.

Look for future updates on Iowa's public-private partnership in this newsletter and on the Community Empowerment website at www.empowerment.state.ia.us.

Bi-monthly Tip on Engaging Business Leaders:

Business leaders are critical players in the policy debate around early childhood. They understand the connection between quality early childhood programs and workforce development. And they can be strong allies for early childhood once they've seen the connection between brain development, quality early childhood programs and school success.

Those who serve on your board and the boards of nonprofits connected to your organization are powerful potential allies. But few have been asked to do more than help raise money. Consider targeting them to get involved.

Why should these community powerbrokers care about early childhood?

Businesses need well-educated and well-trained workers, along with consumers who are earning enough money to spend. Quality early childhood programs boost success in work and build community prosperity.

Four Easy Steps to Get Business Involved

1. Identify – Your board members likely have personal relationships with key policymakers. Ask them who they know and if they'd be willing to make a call or two when the need arises.

2. Educate – Business leaders appreciate hard data, particularly anything showing economic returns on investment in early childhood. But you need to bring it to their attention! Use research that can bolster your case for action. Look for ways to

present this information to opinion leaders; make a presentation to a Chamber of Commerce meeting, invite business leaders to a special breakfast or get on meeting agendas of other business groups to lay out early childhood needs in your community.

3. Persuade – Nothing is as engaging as being part of a movement. Once your community leaders understand why early childhood matters, ask them to join a business leaders’ group supporting early childhood. You can create such an ad hoc group; bring them together for briefings on early childhood issues in your community. You can also create displays of community support for early learning. For example, the United Ways of Midland and Odessa, Texas convened a business forum called “Pre-Kindergarten as Economic Development,” co-sponsored by local Chambers of Commerce and other businesses. More than 250 community and business leaders attended, including prominent legislators. Media coverage helped generate support for the issue and bolstered support for legislation.

4. Activate – You know who they are, you’ve prepped them with the facts, and you’ve convinced them to get engaged. Now what? If you have a policy agenda, brief them on it and ask them to express public support through letters to newspapers or decision makers. If funding cuts are being considered locally that could hurt young children, ask them to speak out. No burning issues? Keep them informed on early childhood programs in your area, and be poised to activate them to support your case.

Adapted from Courting New Champions: Working with Business to Promote Policies for Kids from BornLearning.org.



Notice: This information is designed for general educational purposes only and is not intended, nor should it be construed as or relied upon, as legal advice. Please consult your legal counsel or other employment advisor for specific legal advice.

Workforce Tip: Revised 7 - 1 Required Posters

The revised 7-1 posters are now available from Iowa Workforce Development. These posters contain the new Federal and Iowa minimum wage changes; Your Rights Under the Family & Medical Leave Act; Equal Employment Opportunity is The Law; Employee Polygraph Protection Act; IOSH Safety and Health Protection; Unemployment Insurance; and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

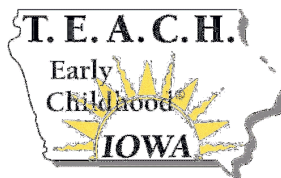
The posters also contain the updated information from the Iowa Civil Rights Act that prohibits discrimination in employment because of a person’s Age (18 and older), Race, Creed, National Origin, Color, Gender Identity, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Disability, and Religion.

The posters are provided at no cost, are standard poster sized and can be delivered, mailed or picked up at the Iowa Workforce Center, 430 East Grand Ave, Des Moines.

To order or for more information please contact:
Craig Immerfall
craig.immerfall@iwd.iowa.org
515-242-5985

**Iowa
AEYC/T.E.A.C.H.
Early Childhood®
IOWA**

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Empowerment and T.E.A.C.H. – Together, we can make a difference!

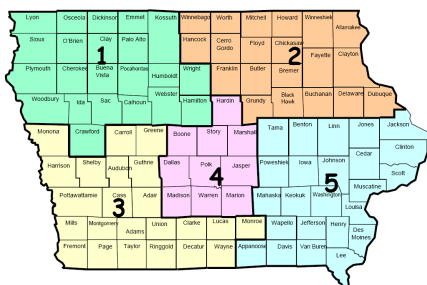
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA is a compensation and retention program for those who work in child care or preschool in Iowa. Through college scholarships for credentials and degrees in early childhood education, the **quality of child care is improving in over two hundred child care programs around the state, and providers are staying in their current programs longer and being paid more!** Empowerment programs throughout the state also provide supports and incentives to assist child care programs and preschools in making quality improvements. **How can we be more efficient with our resources, together?**

- ✓ T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood IOWA provides supports and incentives to assist providers, teachers and directors working in Iowa’s regulated child care programs, including child development homes, centers, and preschools, in achieving CDA credentials, associate and bachelors’ degrees in early childhood education, and early childhood endorsements to teaching licenses. Knowing this support is in place for higher education, Empowerment areas may choose to require programs to consider asking key staff to work towards degrees and credentials in order to be eligible for other available funding.
- ✓ With T.E.A.C.H. available state-wide, local Empowerment areas may choose to spend their quality dollars in other ways and ask programs to access T.E.A.C.H. funding for higher education supports. (Many thanks to our state-wide funding partners from the Department of Human Services and the state-wide Professional Development dollars through Empowerment.)
- ✓ Empowerment areas may provide stipends or incentives to encourage a program to use T.E.A.C.H. Consider calling it a professional development stipend, you may provide it to the program per employee who is on an active T.E.A.C.H. contract. This can assist the program with some of their costs for compensation increases for the participant, as well as other quality improvements.
- ✓ Host an “information” meeting for child care directors and providers in your area to share information about college opportunities in your area, the CDA, T.E.A.C.H. We’d be happy to be invited.
- ✓ Host a “professional development” meeting in your area for key partners from CCR&R, AEA, Head Start, ISU Extension, your local colleges, etc., to plan ways that you can work together to encourage more providers to earn degrees and credentials. We’d be glad to join the meeting, too!

T.E.A.C.H. is a program of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children. Call Barb Merrill for more information, (515) 331-8000 ext. 11, or (800) 469-2392, www.iowaaeyc.org, email bmerrill@iowaaeyc.org.

Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

Submitted by, Cathy Wheatcraft
Director Region 4



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

Sources:

- *Parents' Perception of Child Care in the United States, NACCRRA 2006*
- *We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight, NACCRRA 2007*
- www.naccrra.org

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies Recommends Stricter Regulation for Child Care Programs

Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care staff Julie Ingersoll, Team Lead; Jody Caswell, Quality Improvement Program manager and Cathy Wheatcraft, Regional Director for Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Iowa represented Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) at the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) State Network Leadership Institute in October. The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) represents over 800 state and local child care resource and referral agencies located in every state.

Nationally, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies touch the lives of nearly five million families a year and provide training to over 500,000 child care providers annually. Last year in Iowa, CCR&R assisted 20,715 parents in locating child care and provided training to over 53,000 providers.

Linda Smith, Executive Director of NACCRRA talked about the child care crisis facing many American families. Parents looking for child care are faced with the challenge of finding high quality, affordable child care.

CCR&R agencies help parents find child care, understand how to identify child care that meets the needs of their family and choose child care that is appropriate for their child. CCR&R Parent Referral Counselors provide parents with resources and information to make informed decisions. According to Smith, "Without Child Care Resource and Referral, parents' ability to choose appropriate settings for their children would be severely hindered. That is why specific language about Child Care Resource and Referral was included in the federal TANF law. "

In 2005 NACCRRA conducted surveys and focus groups with hundreds of parents from all over the country about what they want for their children and expect of their child care providers. What NACCRRA found was that parents assume that their child care programs are licensed and therefore, regularly inspected. Parents assume that those who care for their children have had background checks and are trained to do their jobs. According to Smith, "We found that parents have very clear expectations of government when it comes to protecting their children, but frequently what parents think turns out to be wrong. Most parents, rightly or wrongly, assume that their child care programs are licensed and regularly inspected; they assume that those who care for their children have had background checks and are trained to do their jobs."

"We Can Do Better: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight" a report released earlier this year reveals that states fall far short of meeting basic requirements needed to protect the health and safety of children in child care, and to promote their school readiness through licensing. The report ranks every state and the Department of Defense (which has its own child care system) on 15 basic criteria related to their current child care center standards and oversight. Iowa ranked 37th. A NACCRRA report on the regulation of home-based programs will be released soon.

States must do a better job in setting standards and conducting oversight in order to improve the quality of child care across the nation. NACCRRA recommends the following actions:

- 40 hours of pre-service training to include basic child development, child guidance and discipline and basic health and safety. NACCRRA believes this training should be the personal responsibility of anyone who wants to work in child care and that is the role of the state to make sure the training is available a minimal cost.

- Require 24 hours of annual training for every child care worker- two hours per month.
- Require all providers caring for unrelated children to have a complete background check including a criminal history check, a check of the child abuse and sex offender registries, and a federal fingerprint check *prior* to working alone with children.
- Consolidate and publish “user-friendly” child care regulations that are clearly understandable to parents and providers.
- Establish requirements for sharing child care safety violations and in particular child care licensing revocations with parents, but also with the CCR&Rs so that they can provide the most accurate information to parents.
- Establish a state child abuse registry that specifically tracks abuse and neglect in child care settings. Require this to be checked as part of the background screening process.

As Linda Smith states there is no “silver bullet” solution. While Iowa discusses moving mandatory registration for Child Development Home Providers from six children to three, we need to focus on what stricter regulations, higher standards and a better trained workforce would mean to the quality of child care in Iowa. State regulations should do more than set minimum standards for keeping children healthy and safe. According to Smith, “State licensing standards and enforcement policies should establish the foundation for quality child care. “

It's About Our Kids Website



Sheila Hansen,
shansen@cfpciowa.org;
Tiffany Smith, LMSW,
tiffany@cfpciowa.org

Iowa Child Policy Coalition Participants:

- [Child and Family Policy Center](#)
- [Child Care Resource and Referral](#)
- [Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa](#)
- [Early Childhood Iowa](#)
- [Every Child Counts](#)
- [Every Child Matters](#)
- [Iowa Afterschool Alliance](#)
- [Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children](#)
- [Iowa Association of School Boards](#)
- [Iowa Community Action Association](#)
- [Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church](#)
- [Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association](#)
- [Iowa Head Start Association](#)
- [Iowa Human Needs Advocates](#)
- [The Joan & Lyle Middleton Center for Children's Rights at the Drake University Law School](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers - Iowa Chapter](#)
- [Orchard Place](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse Iowa](#)
- [RESULTS](#)
- [State Public Policy Group](#)
- [Urban Education Network](#)
- [Visiting Nurse Services](#)
- [Women for Change](#)

Presidential Candidate Website

A coalition of 23 organizations is pleased to announce a new website with a goal of elevating child policy issues to the visibility and prominence they deserve during the Iowa Presidential caucuses. This site was designed to provide information and resources on issues related to children and families for potential caucus-goers and voters throughout the upcoming Presidential caucuses and subsequent Presidential election. Within the www.itsaboutourkids.org site you will find:



- Presidential Candidates' responses to a survey on child and family policy issues such as child health care, early education, and family economic security;
- Contact information for Presidential Candidates;
- Links to state and national child policy advocacy and research organizations;
- Links to Candidates' websites with additional information about their positions on other important policies related to children and families; and
- Resources for persons attending Presidential Candidate events in Iowa and information about preparing for and attending the Iowa caucuses

As the home page indicates, child policy issues can easily be overshadowed in Presidential campaigns and don't always receive the attention they deserve. Candidates themselves may not speak out on important child policy issues; and when they do, their statements may attract little press or attention.

This website is designed to help those concerned about child policy to raise these issues to the prominence they deserve in the primary campaign season and on into the general election.

Please take a look at the website and publicize it to others. We hope you enjoy this valuable resource!



Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

**Next: Part 3 -
What Adults Can Do to
Keep Kids Safe**

Save the Date!

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa will host its 27th annual child abuse prevention conference on April 21-22, 2008 at the Sheraton West Des Moines. More information will be coming this fall to PCA Iowa's website at www.pcaiowa.org.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Part 2: Responding to Children's Sexual Behaviors

Written by Amber Russell and Christy Thies, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

In the last edition of this newsletter, we discussed how understanding healthy sexual development will help parents raise sexually healthy and safe children. In order to be an "askable" adult and someone a child would feel safe to talk to if he/she were to experience an unsafe touch, parents and caregivers must respond appropriately and sensitively to children's sexual behaviors. How we respond to children's behaviors sends a variety of messages to kids, one of which is whether sexuality is something they can talk about or something that must be kept secret.

Appropriate responses to sexual behaviors vary depending on a child's age and developmental level. It is healthy and normal for very young children (0-3)* to fondle their genitals, so an appropriate response to this behavior would be to ignore it. Older children (3-5)*, however, can begin to understand privacy and that this sort of self-touching behavior is inappropriate for public areas.

As children get older (2-6)* they will also begin to explore sexuality through behaviors with other children, e.g. playing doctor, pretending to be "mommy" and "daddy," and becoming interested in where babies come from. Rather than responding to these situations in ways that tell a child they are doing something wrong or bad (i.e. telling them to "stop that!"), parents and caregivers should view these opportunities as teachable moments. If you happen across two same-age children examining one another, you could ask them what they are doing. For young children, exploring bodies is a natural part of exploring the world. If we ask children to tell us what they are doing in their own words, we can use the moment to explain, for example, why Johnny and Susie have different body parts.

Children will eventually ask questions about sexuality, body differences, how babies are made, and other topics that can make us uncomfortable. A good way to respond to these questions is to ask children what they think. We can use their answers to tell us both what they know and what sort of information they might be looking for. Simple answers are often best when responding to these questions. For example, a child might ask where she came from, and when you ask her what she thinks, she might answer, "Des Moines." Her answer tells us she probably wanted to know where she was born or in what hospital, as opposed to wanting a narrative about how babies are made. If you start with simple answers, children will ask for more information if that's what they are seeking. Finding out what they know first can also help us dispel any myths or misinformation they may have received.

It's never too late to start talking to kids about sexuality, body safety, and appropriate touching. However, these conversations make many adults feel embarrassed and unsure. Practice talking with another adult about the messages you would like to share with your children in order to overcome this discomfort. Responding sensitively to children's age-appropriate sexual behaviors sends the message that they are healthy and normal and helps to dispel the secrecy and shame that works to a potential abuser's advantage.

For more information about responding to children's sexual behaviors and talking about sexuality, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/educational-resources/for-parents/human-sexuality-what-children-need-to-know.htm> (Planned Parenthood)

http://www.aacap.org/page_ww?section=FACTS+for+Families&name=Talking+To+Your+Kids+About+Sex (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub1154-SayNO.pdf> (NY State Office of Children and Family Services)

<http://www.familiesaretalking.org/parents.html> (Families Are Talking)

<http://www.darkness2light.org/7Steps/step3.asp> (Darkness to Light)

<http://www.region.peel.on.ca/health/commhlth/parov1yr/askable.htm> (Peel Public Health)

*Age ranges are approximate.

Family Support Update

Submitted by Janet Gartin, Family Support Coordinator
Office of Empowerment

Iowa is taking critical steps toward increasing the quality of all family support services operating in our state. The Iowa Peer Review process and the draft Iowa Family Support Standards were piloted in three sites during the month of September. The Peer Review Workgroup has completed an evaluation of the process and the standards.

The workgroup is recommending minor modifications to the standards, mainly for the purposes of clarity or ease of use. They suggested that a glossary be developed for the standards. They also suggested a table of contents be added. The workgroup felt strongly that all of the draft standards are vital to quality family support services.

The workgroup is recommending some significant changes to the sequence of events in the peer review process to make the process more program-friendly and to reflect the partnership nature that is intended. Future peer reviews will be implemented in the following sequence:

1. Introductory community meeting (Process and standards are explained)
2. Family Support program completes an initial self-evaluation.
3. Family Support program develops a quality improvement plan that outlines their need for technical assistance and/or training to meet the standards.
4. The Family Support program is assigned a technical assistance contact person that will assist them in the development of their quality improvement plan and their technical assistance needs.
5. Within 12 months of completing step 2, the family support program will complete a self-evaluation stating how they are meeting each of the standards and their readiness to complete a peer review to the Office of Empowerment.
6. The Office of Empowerment will arrange for an onsite peer review using primarily the same schedule of events as the pilot.
7. If the peer review team determines that the program is meeting all of the standards adequately, the Office of Empowerment will issue the program the Iowa Family Support Credential.
8. If the peer review team does not determine that the program is meeting all of the standards, the program will initiate a second quality improvement plan to make corrections and implement new practice or policy to meet the standard(s). The peer review team will evaluate the new information and determine if they program is now meeting all of the standard(s). If they are meeting the standards adequately they will be awarded an Iowa Family Support Credential.
9. If after the second review the program is still not meeting the family support standards they will have to start the process over from the beginning. They will also be a very low priority for participating further in the peer review process.

Frequently Asked Questions - -

Question 1 *Is participation in the Peer Review process mandatory?*

Answer 1 No, participation is not mandatory. The peer review will not be widely available due to limited funding.

Question 2 *My family support program isn't comprehensive enough to meet these standards. Why are you trying to change our program?*

Answer 2 The standards are very basic. If your program is currently not meeting all of the standards we would encourage you to implement in your program all of the standards to increase the quality of your services. We all want to achieve positive outcomes with the families we are serving. We would also urge you to carefully review the standards compared to your program model. A crosswalk of the standards with the major family support programs operating in Iowa demonstrates a good alignment between program models and the standards.

Question 3 *Are only empowerment-funded programs eligible to participate?*

Answer 3 The standards and the peer review process are open to all family support programs operating in the state of Iowa. Due to limited funding, the priority is given to programs that do not have an external evaluation process.

Question 4 *What are the program costs for participating in the peer review?*

Answer 4 The majority of the costs are covered with state-level empowerment professional development funds. The program or local empowerment board is asked to provide breakfast and lunch both days of the onsite to the peer reviewers to help defray out of pocket expenses. There are also program costs in terms of time spent in preparation, participation and follow up. This is a very inexpensive method for the program to receive an external evaluation.

Question 5. *Would a Healthy Families America credentialed program (or Early Head Start or FaDSS) participate in the peer review process?*

Answer 5. A HFA credentialed program already receives external evaluation through the credentialing process. This process is designed for programs that do not have an external evaluation process. The same is true for Early Head Start and FaDSS programs.

Question 6. *Do you anticipate that all programs will be required to have an Iowa family Support Credential in the future?*

Answer 6. See Answer 1.

Question 7. *Who should I contact if I have more questions or would like to participate?*

Answer 7. Please contact the Family Support Coordinator and speak directly with her. Contact information is: Janet L. Gartin, 515-242-5895 or e-mail at Janet.Gartin@iowa.gov



Earn a Parenting Education Certificate of Completion!

Partnering with Parents, offered by Iowa State University Extension, helps people gain in-depth knowledge and skill in effectively planning, delivering, and evaluating parenting education. People can participate in the full series (11 modules) and earn a Parenting Education Certificate of Completion, as well as undergraduate or graduate credit. Or people can pick and choose module topics that are of most interest to them. Individuals who have successfully completed the *Family Development Certification Training*, only need to complete 7 of the 11 modules in order to earn a Parenting Education Certificate of Completion. (see <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp/ISUcoursecredits.html>)

Partnering with Parents is offered face to face in Iowa, as well as completely online. On January 8, 2008, the training series will start in Ames. Individuals can also participate in the full online version beginning January 14, 2008. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp/index.html>

*Scholarship funds to reimburse registration fees for *Partnering with Parents*, as well as other identified family support training programs, are available through funding allocated to the Office of Empowerment for professional development activities. See www.iowafadss.org for more information.

Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI)



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The number of children’s items being recalled has set new national records creating public alarm. Consumer awareness of child safety is heightened like never before. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the US Food and Drug Administration are charged with protecting US residents from harmful/dangerous products.

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission** lists recalled and hazard announcement on their web site: <http://www.cpsc.gov> To receive up-to-date announcements of hazards and recalls, subscribe to the CPSC electronic announcements:

[Sign Up for Email Announcements \(Español\)](#)

Get free recall and safety news by email as part of CPSC’s “Drive for 1 Million” campaign.

The **Food and Drug Administration** lists food and medication recalls and hazards on their web site: <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/7alerts.html>.

Healthy Child Care Iowa maintains a list of the product recalls and hazard warning pertaining to children. The product covers the last six months. To view recalled product information, first select a product category from the following list.

- [Beds, Cribs, and Bedding](#) No new recalls
- [Child Clothing, Shoes, and Accessories](#) **2** new recalls
- [Equipment \(including infant supplies/equipment\)](#) **5** new recalls
- [Food, Drug, Medicine hazards and recalls](#) **3** new recalls specific to children
- [Furniture Related to Child Care and Early Education](#) no new recalls
- [Toys and Play Related Items](#) **29** new recalls



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Recent Recalls

Children's Sunglasses Curious George Plush Dolls AC Power Adaptors DVD/CD/MP3 Players Cribs Aqua Dots (Español) Toy Cars (Español)	Toy Robots Duck Music Boxes Spinning Tops Duck Family Toys Toy Dragster and Funny Cars Wagons Pool Toys Humidifiers Kitchen Toys (Español)
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CKF Chosen to Participate in Retention Initiative

Iowa was one of eight states selected to participate in the *Retention Initiative: Achieving Stability in Medicaid and the State Children's health insurance Program (SCHIP) Coverage*. The focus of this initiative is on improving the retention of eligible children and adults in Medicaid and SCHIP by encouraging Medicaid and SCHIP programs to adopt changes in policies & procedures designed to improve retention rates. This two-year initiative is led by the Southern Institute on Children and Families and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Participation in the *Retention Initiative* will assist Iowa in determining what changes are needed to its public insurance programs' policies and processes to maximize retention. Individualized technical assistance will assist the state in streamlining Medicaid and SCHIP renewal processes by identifying the most crucial retention issues associated with these processes. Through this initiative, Iowa anticipates administrative simplification of renewal policies and procedures, with potential for changes in eligibility rules, resulting in stabilization of health care coverage for low-income families. These efforts could potentially lower uninsured rates, reduce temporary periods with no health care coverage, and reduce administrative costs associated with the churning in and out of Iowa's public insurance programs.

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