

July 2008
CEA Coordinator
Address
City, State, Zip



Dear Coordinators:

Iowa was awarded a National Governor's Association Early Childhood Advisory Council project grant. This grant affords Early Childhood Iowa and partners the opportunity to provide technical assistance and process support to local Community Empowerment Areas (CEAs) to advance early childhood systems development and integration. This technical assistance will be provided through five regional meetings across the state (Ames, Atlantic, Charles City, Iowa City, and Storm Lake).

A national level expert on state and local system development, Ms. Kay Johnson co-director of Project THRIVE at National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and President of the Johnson Consulting Group has been hired to provide the technical assistance and guidance at the regional meetings. A representative from the Governor's office will also be in attendance to highlight how early childhood system development fits into Governor Culver's administrative priorities.

As the Community Empowerment Coordinator and Board chair for the state, we are requesting each CEA bring five to six representatives to their regional meeting. The recommended team would include three current board members and two or three non-board members. Inviting broad community representation will allow CEA the opportunity to engage partners, new and veteran, while thinking about developing an integrated, comprehensive early care, health, and education system. When inviting team members, please consider:

- Diverse representation and perspectives (e.g., race/ethnicity, special needs, public and private)
- Leaders from a variety of fields impacted by early childhood (e.g. Title V or local health agencies, school districts, community action agencies, early care and education providers etc.)
- Involvement of stakeholders in your system who might be currently under-involved (see reverse)

Our process includes planning and development tools. Prior to the regional meeting, CEA's will receive a tool for community system assessment, which will help identify the current levels of system integration. During and following the regional meeting, each CEA will be asked to complete an action plan at the regional meeting to develop goals and activities to continue system development. Your work will be reported through the Community Empowerment annual report.

Attached is a list of CEAs with assigned regional locations. Regional meetings are being planned for the first and second weeks of September. We will be sending out additional information throughout the coming months to prepare your CEA for the meetings. In the meantime, please begin formation of your teams.

Please share with us in the excitement of this opportunity to strengthen the early childhood systems in Iowa. Together, our state and local work can help every child achieve optimal development.

Sincerely,

Shanell Wagler
Community Empowerment

Gretchen Hageman
Iowa Department of Public Health

"The collective wisdom of a group exceeds the sum of its parts. Progress and innovation may depend less on the brilliance of the leaders, than on a group of diverse people working together. Diversity and collaboration lead to superior outcomes."

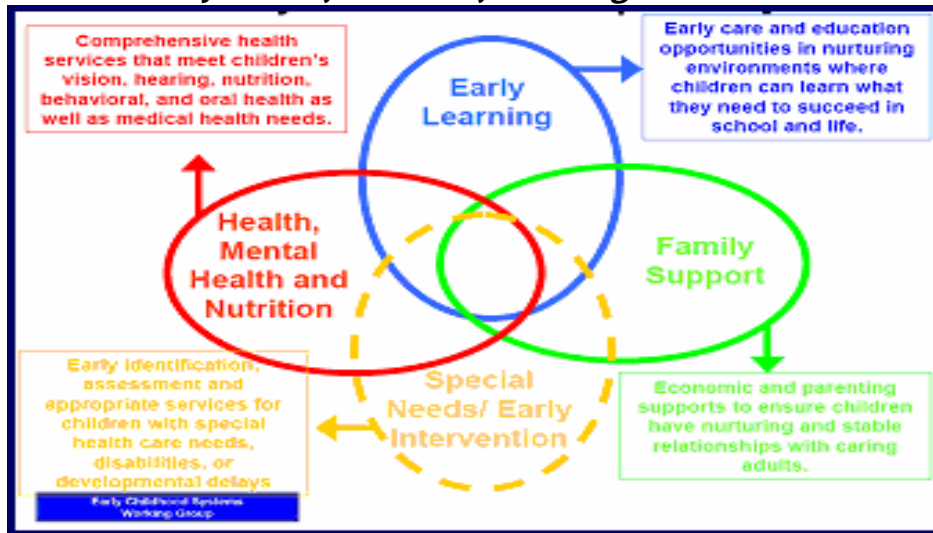
— Barb Merrill in the IAEYC Summer 2008 newsletter



Every Child beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful

The following diagrams show components of an early childhood system:

System of Services for Young Children



Product of the Early Childhood Systems Working Group.
Adopted from work of Charles Bruner, PhD. – Child and Family Policy Center of Iowa

Pictorial Description of Early Childhood Iowa



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