

Goal 1: Conduct a needs assessment of comprehensive early care, health, and education programs and services

Objective 1: Provide leadership for the development of a comprehensive needs assessment of early childhood programs, services and workforce by January 2011.

Activities:

- Provide a mechanism for state and local-level partners to complete a needs assessment on the availability of quality early childhood programs.
- Provide recommendations on local funding categories and state funds related to early childhood based on the gaps and needs identified in the assessment.

One of the main goals of the ECI Council is to continually update the ECI Strategic Plan and make data based decisions on needs and gaps. The comprehensive needs assessment will provide the Council with updated statewide data needs for children ages 0 through 5. The Department of Public Health will issue a request for proposal to contract for the completion of the needs assessment. The needs assessment will be used by other projects under the umbrella of ECI such as Project LAUNCH, *1st Five-* Healthy Mental Development, 4- year old preschool program, Early Head Start/Head Start, Community Empowerment, etc.

Objective 2: Conduct a comprehensive workforce study for early care, health and education professionals by May 2012.

Activities:

- Provide leadership for the development of a comprehensive workforce study.
- Work with the Diversity Advisory Group to integrate survey questions related to the workforce diversity needs.

A comprehensive needs assessment will be completed to examine the current workforce situation and needs of the early care, health and education professionals. A workforce study is currently being conducted with a sample of early care providers in the state and will be used as a framework for this workforce study. A request for proposal will be issued for a contract to develop a survey and provide a final report on the workforce issues of Iowa's early care, health and education providers.

GOAL 2: Build upon current data systems to establish a unified data collection system that provides data measures related to the five result areas in the ECI Strategic Plan

Objective 1: Coordinate new data collection with existing data collection mechanisms by January 2011.

Activities:

- Complete a needs assessment of what data is collected and what databases exist through state agencies involved in Early Childhood Iowa.
- Develop a workgroup with state agencies and other partners to create a plan for collaboration and coordination within the data systems for early childhood.

The first step will be to convene the State Agencies Liaison Team from the state agencies to discuss current databases and develop a matrix of all the databases, purpose and funding support. The State Agency Liaison members will appoint members from their agencies to serve on the ECI data workgroup. The ECI data workgroup will provide recommendations to the ECI Council on data integration and/or the development of a new database. Early Childhood Iowa staff and Council members have been researching what other states have for comprehensive early childhood databases and the issue of unique identifiers for clients.

Objective 2: Convene the ECI Results Accountability component group members and other data experts to identify needed data elements by May 2010.

Activities:

- Analyze the data collected from the ECI Results Accountability component group on current data measures and emerging issues.

- Explore data measures collected by other state for early childhood systems.
- Host meetings to focus on common data measures at the state and local level to show results of the early childhood system.

The ECI results accountability component group will provide leadership for the identifying key data elements that will serve as Iowa's indicators for the success of Early Childhood Iowa. The component group has a framework of indicators to choose from based on the last five years of work and the regional meetings that were recently conducted. The State Agency Liaison Team and the Council will make final recommendations.

Goal 3: Fully implement Early Childhood Iowa's Professional Development framework.

Objective 1: The ECI Council through the Professional Development steering committee will provide leadership to ensure the Professional Development Framework, modeled after NAEYC's Blueprint, is adopted by December 2009 and fully implemented by 2011.

Activities:

- The PD steering committee will work with the ECI Council, state agency liaison team and other partners to prioritize and implement strategies, infusing goals and objectives of the framework into state agencies and private organization goals and budgets.
- The PD Steering Committee will develop PD communication plan.

Over the past year, the ECI Professional Development steering committee has worked extreme hard to engage partners and develop a framework to serves as Iowa's action plan for a comprehensive PD system. Over the next few year strategies from the PD Framework will be implemented. The PD Steering Committee will work with partners on the development of a communication plan. A strong communication plan is essential as we move forward and get commitment from additional stakeholders.

Objective 2: Four Leadership Teams representing the professional development needs of the four sectors (early learning, early intervention/special needs, health, mental health and nutrition and family support) will adopt and implement strategies to provide an integrated, comprehensive network of professional development by December 2010.

Activities:

- Adopt and implement competencies and levels for the workforce roles within each sector, using state and/or nationally recognized professional development standards when appropriate.
- Link adopted professional development competencies to state regulation, standards and into systems (licensure).
- Design and implement credentials, certifications and pathways to support the career advancement of all sectors of our workforce.
- Provide scholarship support to the workforce as they move ahead on a professional development ladder.
- Design career pathway policies that are aligned with job opportunities that reward investments in profession advancement with appropriate compensation.

The four leadership Teams have been meeting since November 2009 and have started implementing strategies within the Framework.

Objective 3: Survey and support the system's capacity to support the professional development needs of all sectors of the workforce by May 2011.

Activities:

- Support and expand the capacity of Institute of Higher Education to support the early care, health and education workforce.
- Develop strategies to promote articulation agreements among community colleges and Institute of Higher Education.

- Review, and as needed, update the Iowa Early Learning Standards, taking into consideration the new framework, the adopted teacher level and competencies, and updates in state/national standards.
- Implement standards for trainers and curriculum.

The EC workforce study will be used as a framework for increasing the need for support related to the professional development needs of early care, health and education providers. The PD Steering Committee will work with representatives from the Institutes of Higher Education to engage them in the comprehensive PD strategies. A professional development coordinator will be hired through the ECAC funds to support the work of the PD system. The PD coordinator will work with staff from other state agencies and private organizations to increase coordination of professional development activities.

Goal 4: Facilitate the development or enhancement of high quality early care, health and education programs to improve school readiness in Iowa.

Objective 1: Strengthen leadership, collaboration and coordination of state agencies and early childhood partners to improve the quality of state and local-level programs by December 2011.

Activities:

- Engage the QSP component workgroup to develop recommendations on high quality early childhood programs.
- Continue to convene the State Agency Liaison Team to provide leadership for collaboration and coordination.
- Support ongoing communication and collaboration among state agencies and Institutes of Higher Education related to best practices and preservice training.

Objective 2: Implement the Diversity Advisory Council workplan that will include strategies to improve the quality of early childhood programs by May 2011.

Activities:

- Continue to provide support for the ECI Diversity Workgroup.
- Provide support for the implementation of the diversity workplan with state agencies and private organizations.

The ECAC grant funds will be used to support the work of the ECI Diversity Workgroup and the implementation of the workplan. The ECI Diversity Workgroup has gained commitment from state agency partners and public/private partners on the integration of the workplan into existing work within their agencies. The ECAC grant will also support the creation of a new Parent Summit to gain input from parents. The ECI Governance component group has provided leadership on the Parent Summit and has researched successful models from other states. The main funding will support parent stipends to participate in the Summit and other meetings.