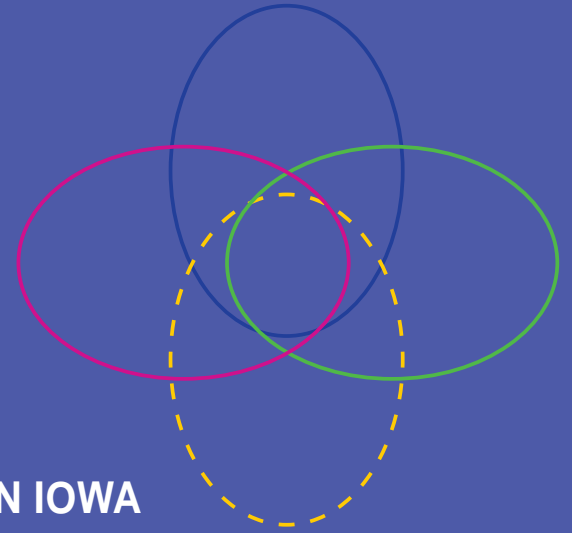


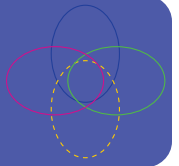
Early Childhood Iowa SYSTEM FRAMEWORK:

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ALL YOUNG CHILDREN IN IOWA



A framework to integrate efforts that will lead to healthy and successful children in Iowa





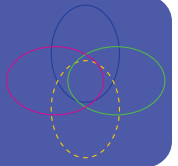
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) is a collaborative and comprehensive partnership focused on the integration of an Early Care, Health and Education system in Iowa in order to improve outcomes for children. The current reality is that programs, policies and systems that serve young children are inadequate to meet the changing needs of children and families. **This framework supports the efforts of local and state-level partners to coordinate, collaborate and integrate efforts that will lead to healthy and successful children.** The framework is built around five achievable result areas: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families and secure and nurturing early care and education environments.

The Early Childhood Iowa System Framework was developed with input from the various public and private stakeholder groups at the local and state level. Early Childhood Iowa brings together system-building projects such as the Early Childhood Comprehensive System project, Community Empowerment, state agencies and other non-governmental partners that support the implementation of a comprehensive, integrated Early Care, Health and Education system. The framework is a dynamic document that will be updated yearly to assess the emerging issues of the system. The framework belongs to all stakeholder groups and organizations who believe that working together collaboratively to coordinate common goals and outcomes will lead to greater success than is possible working in silos. The framework will guide activities and priorities of public and private stakeholders at the state and local level.



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HALLMARKS OF THE FRAMEWORK

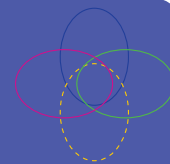
- Comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of young children and their families in the areas of early learning, family support, health and early intervention
- Serves as an overarching umbrella for an integrated, comprehensive early childhood system
- Defines result areas and indicators for the Early Care, Health and Education system in Iowa
- Outlines goals and strategies
- Focuses on results-based accountability

INTENTIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

This document serves as a framework of the Early Care, Health and Education system to build upon existing and emerging efforts of public and private partners. Early Childhood Iowa has developed an ECI Strategic Plan, which entails a thorough list of strategies identifying current needs of young children in Iowa.



A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM IN IOWA



VISION

Early Childhood Iowa's vision: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful. The vision has been adopted by early childhood partners across both public and private sectors and serves as the vision of the Early Care, Health and Education system.

Early Childhood Iowa was developed under the following tenets:

- Early childhood system efforts built upon existing work
- Cross-system state agency partnerships
- Broad input from multiple state and local-level stakeholders

While Early Childhood Iowa is stakeholder driven, it is also grounded in national and state-level evidence-based initiatives and strategies which guide system change. The framework embraces four overlapping systems (the four ovals, see page 4).

An early childhood development system is made up of interrelated parts working together toward a common goal: to ensure the healthy growth and optimal development of young children and their families.

RESULT AREAS

- Healthy Children
- Children Ready to Succeed in School
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Secure and Nurturing Families
- Secure and Nurturing Early Care and Education Environments

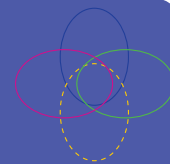
SYSTEM STRENGTHS AND GAPS

Strengths in the system include:

- Progress in increasing access to health care and medical and dental homes for children and young families
- Powerful resources and promising local initiatives addressing mental health and social/emotional development
- Program and leader commitment to incorporating evidence-based practices into family support and parent education
- Codification of ECI - strengthening presence of Early Childhood systems
- *First Years First* support
- New funding for the Voluntary 4-Year-old Preschool Program

Challenges in the system include:

- Fragmentation—multiple, separate systems
- Funding gaps
- Lack of public understanding of the importance of early childhood and early childhood services
- Lack of participation and engagement of non-traditional partners
- Need an increase of stakeholders with cultural/racial/ethnic diversity
- Need clearer focus on collaborative efforts to affect results
- Poor to mediocre quality of child care, lack of regulatory staff and oversight



SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK

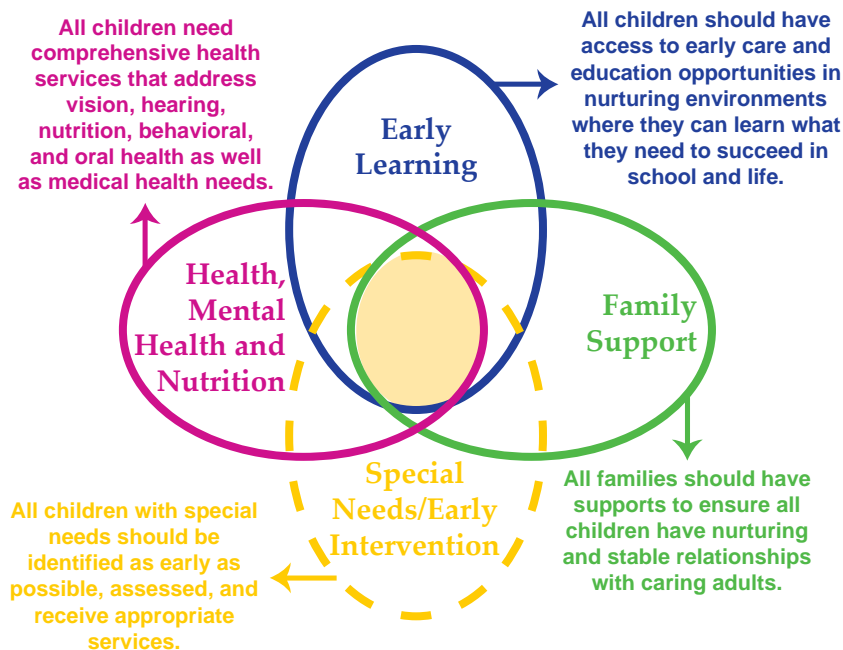
A systems framework involves more than individual components successfully operating separately. These components must work together in a coordinated and effective way. Early Childhood Iowa considers programs, policies, strategies and planning efforts that integrate all the systems in the lives of Iowa's young children and their families and consider how those systems work together.

EXAMPLES OF THESE LINKAGES IN IOWA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Effective referral protocols between health and Early ACCESS -Part C (IDEA)
- Effective referral protocols between early care and education programs and mental health services
- The inclusion of mental health consultants in early care and education environments
- Family support programs supporting kindergarten transitions
- Iowa's 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative coordinating with family support programs

Some issues overlap all the system-building components and linkages such as the role of ECI and our partners to coordinate,

educate and communicate around the system-building efforts and raise awareness of the importance of a strong early childhood system to school readiness. Another overarching theme is the consideration of Iowa's increased diversity in assuring a high quality within each oval and for Iowa's early childhood system as a whole.



Developed by the Early Childhood Iowa Systems Workgroup

VISION: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful



INDICATORS

Percent of low birth weight babies

Rate of children immunized at a public clinic by age 2

GOALS

Increase the number of children with a medical home

Increase the number of children with a dental home

Increase access to and utilization of social, emotional and mental health services

Increase access to and utilization of prenatal care services

Increase access to and utilization of preventive health care services

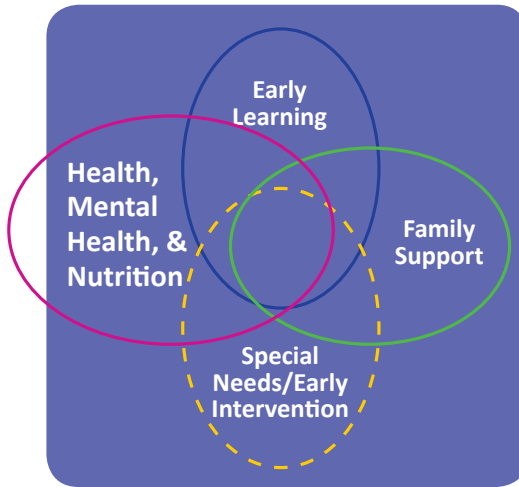
Increase the number of children with health care coverage

STRATEGIES

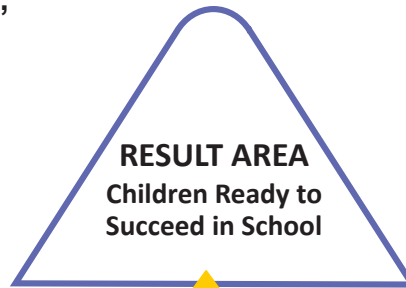
- Assure children have comprehensive health coverage that includes parity of developmental, social, emotional and mental health services
- Increase the availability of appropriate and coordinated mental health services for children including early childhood developmental screening
- Build and expand the capacity to serve children, that lack appropriate health care providers, with social and behavioral problems through telehealth
- Develop, promote and implement policies that will advance 1st Five Healthy Mental Development strategies and outcomes

- Promote the medical and dental home concept as strategies to extend the effectiveness of primary care providers to meet child development and family education needs
- Facilitate access to a medical home for all children (including medical, dental, vision and hearing)
- Support the Health Care Reform initiatives spearheaded through IDPH
- Continue to promote entry into prenatal care during the first trimester using a medical home

- Continue to promote the I-Smile infrastructure at the local level to improve and prioritize dental health for children and families
- Implement recruitment and retention strategies for underserved areas
- Continue to train physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners on conducting dental screenings and risk assessments
- Increase education to health care providers about perinatal health issues, including oral health



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INDICATORS

Percent of children with pre-literacy skills

Percent of children enrolled in quality setting

GOALS

Increase the level of performance of children in the areas of learning, communication, movement, self-help, social skills and emotional health

Increase the capacity of schools to be ready to meet the educational needs of all children

Increase family capacity to provide a quality early learning environment

Increase access to affordable quality early learning environments for all children

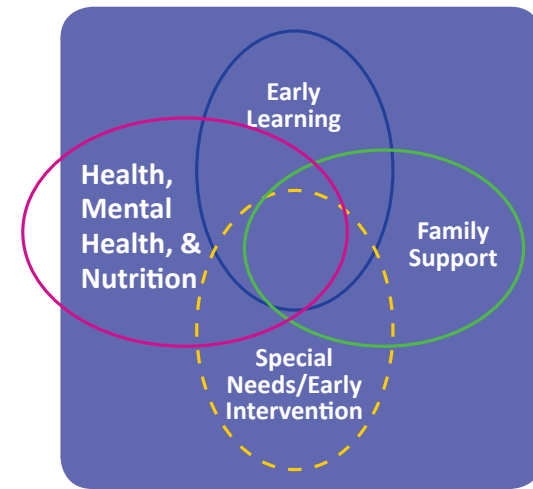
STRATEGIES

- Use Iowa's Early Learning Standards as a tool to enhance the quality of early learning environments
- Continue to promote Iowa's Quality Preschool Programs Standards and provide technical assistance and verification support
- Increase understanding of childrens' need for optimal health and development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive and language)

- Assist communities in developing transition plans for all children transferring from early childhood education settings to kindergarten
- Continue to promote the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program
- Adopt consistent standards across early care and education programs and state agencies which reflect quality care

- Promote access to family support programs that follow evidence-based practices
- Educate parents on quality programs and the value of school readiness
- Provide prenatal family support programs

- Assist communities in developing plans to ensure that quality Early Care, Health and Education environments are available for all young children
- Continue to promote the Quality Rating System and provide incentives for participation



VISION: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful



INDICATORS

Rate of serious crime per 100,000 population

Total arrests of children 18 years and under for any offense

Number of employed persons divided by the laborforce

Child death rate due to unintentional injuries

GOALS

Increase the safety of young children and families in their communities

Increase public engagement and support for families with young children

Create community family-friendly workforce policies

Increase community investment in the Early Care, Health, and Education system

Recognize diversity and promote cultural competence in early childhood

STRATEGIES

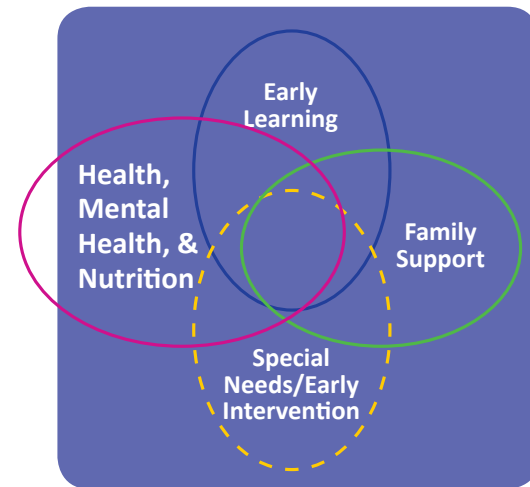
- Increase informal community connectiveness and neighborhood networks to support all children
- Expand evidence-based programs that focus on the safety of children and their families

- Promote the awareness and the use of community information referral access, including the 211 system
- Collaborate with organizers of community and neighborhood events to promote activities for families with young children ages 0 to 5

- Identify and replicate family-friendly practices and policies
- Establish employer recognition for family-friendly policies and practices
- Identify & communicate early childhood, cultural and diversity issues, the benefits of employer involvement and the family-friendly policies

- Build public/private partnerships through the First Years First Initiative
- Promote a stronger relationship between state and local level early childhood system development

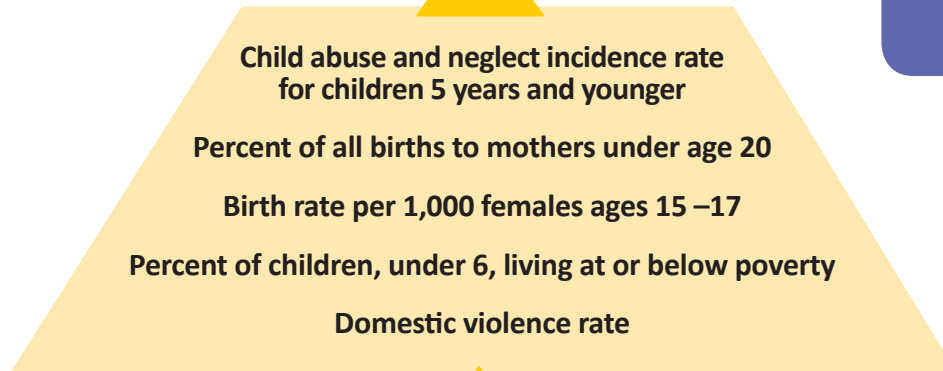
- Create opportunities for community members with diverse backgrounds to participate in community-based leadership training (example: Head Start)
- Create a workplan for addressing diversity issues at the state level



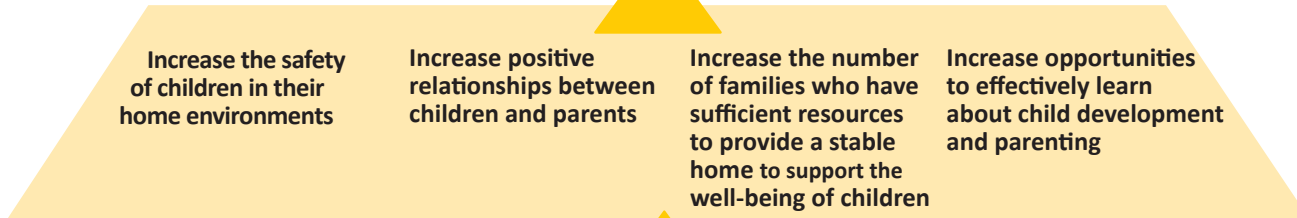
VISION: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful



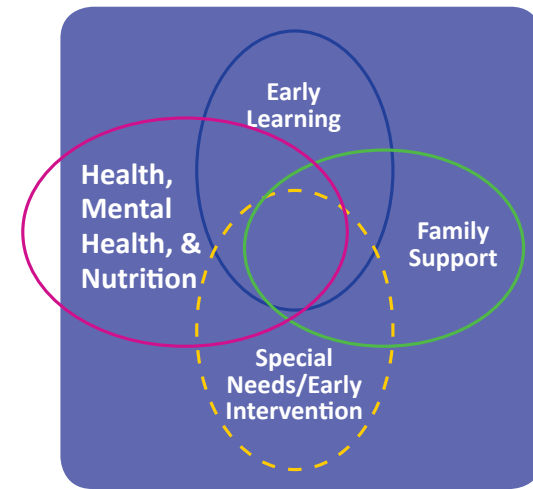
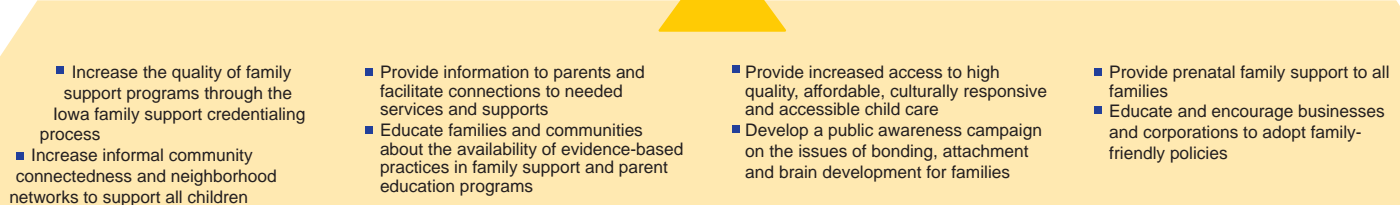
INDICATORS



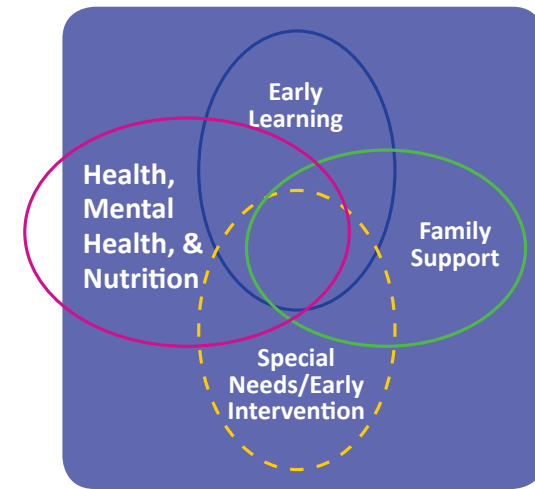
GOALS



STRATEGIES



VISION: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful



INDICATORS

Number of licensed and registered child care slots

Percent of confirmed child abuse by child care providers

Percent of children, under 6 years old, with all parents in the work force

GOALS

Increase the number of high quality early care and education environments for all children

Increase parent and community demand for quality in early care and education environments

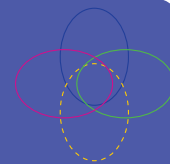
Increase the accessibility and affordability of high quality early care and education environments for all children

STRATEGIES

- Continue to promote the Quality Rating System and provide incentives for participation
- Promote children's health in early care and education programs
 - Develop the capacity of early care and education systems to collaborate and engage family support programs
 - Raise the child care subsidy income eligibility level
- Increase the reimbursement rate for child care income subsidy to providers
- Increase parent and community awareness and demand for mandatory licensing of early care programs

- Increase the understanding of what children need for optimal health and development (physical, social-emotion, cognitive and language)
- Expand and increase participation and understanding of the Quality Rating System (QRS) and provide resources for QRS support

- Support high quality professional development services and opportunities for child care providers
- Continue to promote the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program
- Renew and strengthen the early care and education regulation for licensed and registered child care providers



POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IOWA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

An effort this size, promoting positive change for Iowa's children and families, can only be possible if people and organizations work together and form around a common vision and strategic plan. Thank you to the many partners who have been involved in the work of Early Childhood Iowa and building an integrated, comprehensive Early Care, Health and Education system. Without partnerships from numerous organizations and advocates the work of Early Childhood Iowa would not be possible.

AEA Early Childhood Special Education Network
Adair Community Empowerment Area (CEA)
Area Education Agencies 2; 6; 7; 8; 9; 11; 13; 15; 16
Benton CEA
Bright Horizons
Child Care Resource and Referral agencies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
CD- Dial – Iowa State University
Center for Disabilities and Development
Central Place Family Resource Center
Child and Family Policy Center
Child Care Providers
Child Development Coordinating Council
Child Health Specialty Clinics
Community Health Services of Marion County
Corner Counties CEA
Dallas County CEA
Delta Dental
Department of Economic Development
Department of Education
Department of Human Rights
Department of Human Services
Department of Management – Office of Empowerment
Department of Public Health
Department of Workforce Development
Des Moines Area Community College
Des Moines Health Center
Des Moines Public Schools
Drake University
Drake University Head Start
Dubuque CEA
Clinton and Jackson CEA
Early ACCESS
five giant steps

Genesis Development Center
Governor's Office
Hawkeye Community Action Agency
Hand4Learning
Hardin CEA
Head Start Agencies
Head Start State Collaboration Office
Healthy Child Care Iowa Campaign
HOPES (Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success) Family Support Programs
Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
Iowa Association of School Boards
Iowa Chapter for the American Academy of Pediatrics
Iowa Community College Early Childhood Alliance
Iowa Dental Hygienists Association
Iowa Empowerment Board
Iowa Family Development Alliance
Iowa Family Resource Network
Iowa Federation of Mental Health
Iowa Head Start Association
Iowa Maternal and Child Health Advisory Council
Iowa Nutrition Network
Iowa Public Television
Iowa School Boards Foundation
Iowa State University
Iowa State University Extension
Jasper CEA
Kaplan Early Learning Co
Kirkwood Community College
Lakeshore Learning Materials
Language Schoolhouse
Lutheran Services in Iowa
Making Connections

MATURA Action Corporation
Mercy Medical Center
Mid Iowa Community Action Agency
Mid Iowa Health Foundation
North Iowa Community Action Organization
Parents as Teachers
Partners in Family Development
Partnership 4 Families
Polk County CEA
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
Prevention of Disabilities Policy Council
Primary Health Care
Scott County CEA
Simpson College
Skip-a-Long Child Development Services
State Child Care Advisory Council
T.E.A.C.H
The Learning Zone
Tri-County Child and Family Development Council
United Way of Central Iowa
University of Iowa
University of Northern Iowa
Upper Des Moines Opportunities
Urban Education Network
VA Child Care Center
Warren CEA
Washington CEA
Willkie House, Inc
Women for Change
Youth Emergency Services and Shelter
Zero to Three



February 2009