

## CHAPTER 256I

## EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE

Referred to in [§135.106](#), [237A.26](#), [256C.4](#), [915.35](#)

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**256I.1 Definitions.**

For the purposes of [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Department*” means the department of health and human services.
2. “*Desired results*” means the set of desired results for improving the quality of life in this state for young children and their families identified in [section 256I.2](#).
3. “*Early care*”, “*early care services*”, or “*early care system*” means the programs, services, support, or other assistance made available to a parent or other person who is involved with addressing the health and education needs of a child from zero through age five. “*Early care*”, “*early care services*”, or “*early care system*” includes but is not limited to public and private efforts and formal and informal settings.
4. “*Early childhood Iowa area*” means a geographic area designated in accordance with [this chapter](#).
5. “*Early childhood Iowa area board*” or “*area board*” means the board for an early childhood Iowa area created in accordance with [this chapter](#).
6. “*Early childhood Iowa program*” or “*program*” means the early childhood Iowa program established in [section 256I.5](#).
7. “*Early childhood Iowa state board*” or “*state board*” means the early childhood Iowa state board created in [section 256I.3](#).

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §278; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1000](#)

Section amended

**256I.2 Desired results — purpose and scope.**

1. It is intended that through the early childhood Iowa initiative every community in Iowa will develop the capacity and commitment for using local, informed decision making to achieve the following set of desired results for improving the quality of life in this state for young children and their families:

- a. Healthy children.
- b. Children ready to succeed in school.
- c. Safe and supportive communities.
- d. Secure and nurturing families.
- e. Secure and nurturing early learning environments.

2. The purpose of creating the early childhood Iowa initiative is to empower individuals, communities, and state level partners to achieve the desired results. The desired results will be achieved as private and public entities work collaboratively. This initiative creates a partnership between communities and state level partners to support children zero through age five and their families. The role of the early childhood Iowa state board, area boards, and other state and local government agencies is to provide support, leadership, and facilitation of the growth of individual, community, and state responsibility in addressing the desired results.

3. To achieve the desired results, the initiative’s primary focus shall be on the efforts of

the state and communities to work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of early care, education, health, and human services provided to families with children from zero through age five.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §279](#)

Referred to in [§256I.1](#)

### **256I.3 Early childhood Iowa state board created.**

1. The early childhood Iowa state board is created to promote a vision for a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system in this state. The board shall oversee state and local efforts. The vision shall be achieved through strategic planning, funding identification, guidance, and decision-making authority to assure collaboration among state and local early care, education, health, and human services systems.

2. *a.* The board shall consist of nineteen voting members with fifteen citizen members and four state agency members. The state agency members shall be the directors or their designees of the following agencies: economic development authority, education, health and human services, and workforce development. The designees of state agency directors shall be selected on an annual basis. The citizen members shall be appointed by the governor, subject to confirmation by the senate. The governor's appointments of citizen members shall be made in a manner so that each of the state's congressional districts is represented by at least two citizen members and so that all the appointments as a whole reflect the ethnic, cultural, social, and economic diversity of the state. A member of the state board shall not be a provider of services or other entity receiving funding through the early childhood Iowa initiative or be employed by such a provider or other entity.

*b.* The governor's appointees shall be selected from individuals nominated by area boards. The nominations shall reflect the range of interests represented on the area boards so that the governor is able to appoint one or more members each for early care, education, health, human services, business, faith, and public interests. At least one of the citizen members shall be a service consumer or the parent of a service consumer. The term of office of the citizen members is three years. A citizen member vacancy on the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the balance of the unexpired term.

3. In addition to the voting members, the state board shall include four members of the general assembly with not more than one member from each chamber being from the same political party. The two senators shall be appointed one each by the majority leader of the senate and by the minority leader of the senate. The two representatives shall be appointed one each by the speaker of the house of representatives and by the minority leader of the house of representatives. Legislative members shall serve in an ex officio, nonvoting capacity. A legislative member is eligible for per diem and expenses as provided in [section 2.10](#).

4. The state board shall elect a chairperson from among the citizen members and may select other officers from the voting members as determined to be necessary by the board. The board shall meet regularly as determined by the board, upon the call of the board's chairperson, or upon the call of a majority of voting members. The board shall meet at least quarterly.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §280; 2011 Acts, ch 118, §87, 89; 2012 Acts, ch 1021, §56; 2019 Acts, ch 85, §85; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1001](#)

Referred to in [§256I.1](#)

Confirmation; see [§2.32](#)

Subsection 2, paragraph a amended

### **256I.4 Early childhood Iowa state board duties.**

The state board shall perform the following duties:

1. Provide oversight of early childhood Iowa areas.
2. Manage and coordinate the provision of grant funding and other moneys made available to early childhood Iowa areas by combining all or portions of appropriations or other revenues as authorized by law.
3. Approve the geographic boundaries for the early childhood Iowa areas throughout the state and approve any proposed changes in the boundaries.
4. Create a strategic plan that supports a comprehensive system of early care, education,

health, and human services. The strategic plan shall be developed with extensive community involvement. The strategic plan shall be annually updated and disseminated to the public. Specific items to be addressed in the strategic plan shall include but are not limited to all of the following:

- a. Provisions to strengthen the state structure including interagency levels of collaboration, coordination, and integration.
  - b. Provisions for building public-private partnerships.
  - c. Provisions to support consolidating, blending, and redistributing state-administered funding streams and the coordination of federal funding streams. The strategic plan shall also address integration of services provided through area boards, other state and local commissions, committees, and other bodies with overlapping and similar purposes which contribute to redundancy and fragmentation in early care, education, health, and human services programs provided to the public.
  - d. Provisions for improving the efficiency of working with federally mandated bodies.
  - e. Identification of indicators that measure the success of the various strategies that impact communities, families, and children. The indicators shall be developed with input from area boards.
5. Adopt common performance measures and data reporting requirements, applicable statewide, for services, programs, and activities provided by area boards. The data from common performance measures and other data shall be posted on the early childhood Iowa internet site and disseminated by other means and shall also be aggregated to provide statewide information. The state board shall establish a submission deadline for the annual budget and any budget amendments submitted by early childhood Iowa area boards in accordance with [section 256I.8, subsection 1](#), paragraph “d”, that allow a reasonable period of time for preparation by the area boards and for review and approval or request for modification of the materials by the state board.
6. Assist with the linkage of child welfare and juvenile justice decategorization projects with early childhood Iowa areas.
7. Coordinate and respond to requests from an area board relating to any of the following:
- a. Waiver of existing rules, federal regulation, or amendment of state law, or removal of other barriers. The state board shall consider a community’s current coverage of family support programs and services when responding to an area board’s request for a waiver from the requirement in [section 256I.9, subsection 3](#), paragraph “b”.
  - b. Pooling and redirecting of existing federal, state, or other public or private funds.
  - c. Seeking of federal waivers.
  - d. Consolidating community-level committees, planning groups, and other bodies with common memberships formed in response to state requirements.
8. Develop and implement a designation process for area boards. Allow for flexibility and creativity of area boards in implementing area board responsibilities and provide authority for the area boards to support the communities in the areas served. The process shall provide for action to address poor performing areas as well as higher performing areas. The state board shall determine how often area boards are reviewed under the process.
9. Adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) as necessary for the designation, governance, and oversight of area boards and the administration of [this chapter](#). The state board shall provide for area board input in the rules adoption process.
10. Develop guidelines for recommended insurance or other liability coverage and take other actions to assist area boards in acquiring such coverage at a reasonable cost. Moneys expended by an area board to acquire necessary insurance or other liability coverage shall be considered an administrative cost.
11. In January each year, submit an annual report to the governor and general assembly that includes but is not limited to all of the following:
- a. Any updates to the strategic plan.
  - b. The status and results of the early childhood Iowa initiative efforts to engage the public regarding the early care, education, health, human services, and other needs of children zero through age five.

c. The status and results of the efforts to develop and promote private sector involvement with the early care system.

d. The status of the early childhood Iowa initiative and the overall early care system in achieving the set of desired results.

e. The data and common performance measures addressed by the strategic plan, which shall include but is not limited to funding amounts.

f. The indicators addressed by the strategic plan along with associated data trends and their source.

12. Integrate statewide quality standards and results indicators adopted by other boards and commissions into the state board's funding requirements for investments in early care, health, education, and human services.

13. Ensure alignment of other state departments' activities with the strategic plan.

14. Develop and keep current memoranda of agreements between the state agencies represented on the state board to promote system development and integration and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies.

15. Work with the early childhood Iowa program in building public-private partnerships for promoting the collaborative early care, education, health, and human services system.

16. Support and align the early childhood Iowa internet site with other agencies and improve internet communication.

17. Except for the fiscal oversight measures to be adopted by the department, adopt rules to implement [this chapter](#). The rules shall include but are not limited to the following:

a. Indicators of the effectiveness of early childhood Iowa areas, area boards, and the services provided under the auspices of the area boards. The indicators shall be developed with input from area boards and shall build upon the core indicators of effectiveness for the school ready children grant program.

b. Minimum standards to further the provision of equal access to services subject to the authority of area boards.

c. Core functions for family support services, parent education programs, preschool services provided under a school ready children grant, and other programs and services provided under [this chapter](#). The state board shall also develop guidelines and standards for state-supported family support programs, based upon existing guidelines and standards for the services.

18. Address other measures to advance the initiative. The measures may include any of the following:

a. Advance the development of integrated data systems.

b. Expand efforts to improve quality and utilize evidence-based practices.

c. Further develop kindergarten assessment approaches that are tied to state early learning standards.

19. Direct staff to work with the early childhood stakeholders alliance created in [section 256I.12](#) to inventory technical assistance needs.

2010 Acts, ch 1031, §281; 2015 Acts, ch 140, §11, 12, 58, 59; 2016 Acts, ch 1113, §2, 3; 2017 Acts, ch 29, §63; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1002

Referred to in §135.173A, 256I.12, 256I.13

Subsection 15 amended

#### **256I.5 Early childhood Iowa coordination staff.**

1. The department shall provide administrative support for implementation of the early childhood Iowa initiative and for the state board. The department shall adopt rules in consultation with the state board to provide fiscal oversight of the initiative. The fiscal oversight measures adopted shall include but are not limited to all of the following:

a. Reporting and other requirements to address the financial activities employed by area boards.

b. Regular audits and other requirements of fiscal agents for area boards.

c. Requirements for area boards to undertake and report on fiscal and performance reviews of the programs, contracts, services, and other functions funded by the area boards.

2. An early childhood Iowa program is established in the department to provide

leadership for facilitation, communication, and coordination for the early childhood Iowa initiative activities and funding and for improvement of the early care, education, health, and human services systems. An administrator for the early childhood Iowa program shall be appointed by the director of the department. Other staff may also be designated, subject to appropriation made for this purpose.

3. The state agencies represented on the state board may designate additional staff, as part of the early childhood Iowa initiative, to work as a technical assistance team with the program in providing coordination and other support to the state's comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system.

4. The program shall work with the state and area boards to provide leadership for comprehensive system development. The program shall also do all of the following:

a. Enter into memoranda of agreement with the departments of education and workforce development and the economic development authority to formalize the commitments of the respective departments and the authority to collaborating with and integrating a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system. Items addressed in the memoranda shall include but are not limited to data sharing and providing staffing to the technical assistance team.

b. Work with private businesses, foundations, and nonprofit organizations to develop sustained funding.

c. Maintain the internet site in accordance with [section 256I.10](#).

d. Propose any needed revisions to administrative rules based on stakeholder input.

e. Provide technical support to the state and area boards and to the early childhood Iowa areas through staffing services made available through the state agencies that serve on the state board.

f. Develop, collect, disseminate, and provide guidance for common performance measures for the programs receiving funding under the auspices of the area boards.

g. If a disagreement arises within an early childhood Iowa area regarding the interests represented on the area's board, board decisions, or other disputes that cannot be locally resolved, upon request, provide state or regional technical assistance as deemed appropriate by the program to assist the area in resolving the disagreement.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §282; 2011 Acts, ch 118, §87, 89; 2012 Acts, ch 1021, §57; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1003, 1004, 1358](#)

Referred to in [§237A.30, 256I.1, 256I.9](#)

Section amended

#### **256I.6 Early childhood Iowa areas.**

1. The purpose of an early childhood Iowa area is to enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving early care, education, health, and human services on behalf of the children, families, and other citizens residing in the area. Leadership functions may include but are not limited to strategic planning for and oversight and managing of such programs and the funding made available to the early childhood Iowa area for such programs from federal, state, local, and private sources. The focus of the area shall be to achieve the desired results and to improve other results for families with young children.

2. An early childhood Iowa area shall be designated by using existing county boundaries to the extent possible.

3. The designation of an early childhood Iowa area's boundaries and the creation of an area board are both subject to the approval of the state board. The state board shall determine if a proposed area board can efficiently and effectively administer the responsibilities and authority of the area to be served. The state board may apply additional criteria for designating areas and approving area boards, but shall apply all of the following minimum criteria:

a. An area cannot encompass more than four counties.

b. The counties encompassing a multicounty area must have contiguous borders.

c. A single county area shall have a minimum population of children zero through age five in excess of five thousand, based on the most recent population estimates issued by the United States bureau of the census.

4. If the state board determines exceptional circumstances exist, the state board may waive any of the criteria otherwise specified in [subsection 3](#).

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §283](#)

#### **256I.7 Early childhood Iowa area boards created.**

1. *a.* The early childhood Iowa initiative functions for an area shall be performed under the authority of an early childhood Iowa area board. The members of an area board shall be elected officials or members of the public who are not employed by a provider of services to or for the area board. In addition, the membership of an area board shall include representation from education, health, human services, business, and faith interests, and at least one parent, grandparent, or guardian of a child from zero through age five. However, not more than one member shall represent the same entity or interest.

*b.* Terms of office of area board members shall be not more than three years and the terms shall be staggered.

2. An area board may designate an advisory council consisting of persons employed by or otherwise paid to represent an entity listed in [subsection 1](#) or other provider of service. However, the deliberations of and documents considered by such an advisory council shall be public.

3. An area board shall elect a chairperson from among the members who are citizens or elected officials.

4. An area board is a unit of local government for purposes of [chapter 670](#), relating to tort liability of governmental subdivisions. For purposes of implementing a formal organizational structure, an area board may utilize recommended guidelines and bylaws established for this purpose by the state board.

5. All meetings of an area board or any committee or other body established by an area board at which public business is discussed or formal action taken shall comply with the requirements of [chapter 21](#). An area board shall maintain its records in accordance with [chapter 22](#).

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §284; 2010 Acts, ch 1183, §18; 2013 Acts, ch 141, §11; 2016 Acts, ch 1113, §4; 2018 Acts, ch 1026, §75](#)

#### **256I.8 Early childhood Iowa area board duties.**

1. An early childhood Iowa area board shall do all of the following:

*a.* Designate a public agency of this state, as defined in [section 28E.2](#), a community action agency as defined in [section 216A.91](#), an area education agency established under [section 273.2](#), or a nonprofit corporation, to be the fiscal agent for grant moneys and for other moneys administered by the area board.

*b.* Administer early childhood Iowa grant moneys available from the state to the area board as provided by law and other federal, state, local, and private moneys made available to the area board. Eligibility for receipt of early childhood Iowa grant moneys shall be limited to those early childhood Iowa area boards that have developed an approved community plan in accordance with [this chapter](#). An early childhood Iowa area board may apply to the state board for any private moneys received by the early childhood Iowa initiative outside of a state appropriation.

*c.* Develop a comprehensive community plan for providing services for children from zero through age five. At a minimum, the plan shall do all of the following:

(1) Describe community and area needs for children from zero through age five as identified through ongoing assessments.

(2) Describe the current and desired relationships and services between community providers.

(3) Identify federal, state, local, and private funding sources available in the early childhood Iowa area that will be used to provide services to children from zero through age five.

(4) Describe how funding sources will be used to support young children and their families.

(5) Identify the desired results and the community-wide indicators the area board expects to address through implementation of the comprehensive community plan.

d. Submit an annual report on the effectiveness of the community plan in addressing school readiness and children's health and safety needs to the state board and to the local government bodies in the area. The annual report shall indicate the effectiveness of the area board in addressing state and locally determined goals and the progress on each of the community-wide indicators identified by the area board under paragraph "c", subparagraph (5). The report shall include an annual budget developed for the following fiscal year for the area's comprehensive school ready children grant for providing services for children from zero through age five, and provide other information specified by the state board, including budget amendments, as needed. In addition, each area board must comply with reporting provisions and other requirements adopted by the state board in implementing [section 256I.9](#).

e. Function as a coordinating body for services offered by different entities directed to similar purposes within the area.

f. Assume other responsibilities established by law or administrative rule.

g. Cooperate with the state board, department of education, and school districts and other local education agencies in securing unique student identifiers, in compliance with all applicable federal and state confidentiality provisions.

2. An area board may do any of the following:

a. Designate one or more committees to assist with area board functions.

b. Utilize community bodies for input to the area board and implementation of services.

3. An area board shall not be a provider of services to or for the area board.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §285; 2013 Acts, ch 141, §12; 2015 Acts, ch 140, §13, 58, 59; 2016 Acts, ch 1113, §5; 2018 Acts, ch 1026, §76, 77; 2021 Acts, ch 170, §13](#)

Referred to in [§256I.4](#)

### **256I.9 School ready children grant program.**

1. The state board shall develop and promote a school ready children grant program which shall provide for all of the following components:

a. Identify the performance measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the school ready children grants, including the amount of early intellectual stimulation of very young children, the basic skill levels of students entering school, the health status of children, the incidence of child abuse and neglect, the level of involvement by parents with their children, and the degree of quality of an accessibility to child care.

b. Identify guidelines and a process to be used for determining the readiness of an early childhood Iowa area board for administering a school ready children grant.

c. Provide for technical assistance concerning funding sources, program design, and other pertinent areas.

2. The state board shall provide maximum flexibility to grantees for the use of the grant moneys included in a school ready children grant, including but not limited to authorizing an area board to use grant moneys to pay for regular audits required pursuant to [section 256I.5, subsection 1](#), if moneys distributed to an area board for administrative costs are insufficient to pay for the required audits.

3. A school ready children grant shall, to the extent possible, be used to support programs that meet quality standards identified by the state board. At a minimum, a grant shall be used to provide all of the following:

a. Preschool services provided on a voluntary basis to children deemed at risk.

(1) Family support services promoted to parents of children from zero through age five. Family support services shall include but are not limited to home visitation and parent education. Of the state funding that an area board designates for family support programs, at least sixty percent shall be committed to programs with a home visitation component.

(2) It is the intent of the general assembly that priority for family support program funding be given to programs using evidence-based or promising models for family support.

c. Other services to support the strategic plan developed by the state board.

d. Services to improve the quality and availability of all types of child care.

4. a. A school ready children grant shall be awarded to an area board annually, as

funding is available. Receipt of continued funding is subject to submission of the required annual report data and the state board's determination that the area board is making progress, through the use of specific, quantifiable performance measures and locally identified community-wide indicators, toward achieving the desired results and other results identified in the community plan. Each area board shall participate in the designation process to measure the area's success. If the use of performance measures and community-wide indicators does not show that an area board has made progress toward achieving the results identified in the community plan, the state board shall require a plan of corrective action, provide technical assistance, withhold any increase in funding, or withdraw grant funding.

b. The state board shall distribute school ready children grant moneys to area boards with approved comprehensive community plans based upon a determination of an early childhood Iowa area's designation.

c. An area board's designation shall be determined by evidence of successful collaboration among public and private early care, education, health, and human services interests in the area or a documented program design that supports a strong likelihood of a successful collaboration between these interests.

d. The provisions for distribution of school ready children grant moneys shall be determined by the state board.

e. The amount of school ready children grant funding an area board may carry forward from one fiscal year to the succeeding fiscal year shall not exceed twenty percent of the grant amount for the fiscal year. All of the school ready children grant funds received by an area board for a fiscal year which remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of a fiscal year shall be carried forward to the succeeding fiscal year. However, the grant amount for the succeeding fiscal year shall be reduced by the amount in excess of twenty percent of the grant amount received for the fiscal year.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §286](#); [2011 Acts, ch 132, §10, 11, 106](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1113, §6, 7](#); [2017 Acts, ch 29, §64](#)

Referred to in [§256I.4](#), [256I.8](#), [256I.13](#)

#### **256I.10 Early childhood Iowa internet site.**

1. The department shall provide for the operation of an internet site for purposes of widely distributing information regarding early care, education, health, and human services and other information provided by the departments represented on the state board and the public and private agencies addressing the comprehensive system for such services.

2. Information provided on the internet site shall include but is not limited to all of the following:

a. Information about the early childhood Iowa initiative for state and local use. The information shall include data from the indicators of success and performance measures adopted by the state board and fiscal information and other data developed by the department.

b. A link to a special internet site directed to parents, including parent-specific information on early care, education, health, and human services and links to other resources available on the internet and from other sources.

c. Program standards for early care, education, health, and human services that have been approved by state agencies.

[2010 Acts, ch 1031, §287](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1113, §8](#)

Referred to in [§256I.5](#)

#### **256I.11 Early childhood Iowa fund.**

1. An early childhood Iowa fund is created in the state treasury. The moneys credited to the fund are not subject to [section 8.33](#) and moneys in the fund shall not be transferred, used, obligated, appropriated, or otherwise encumbered except as provided by law. Notwithstanding [section 12C.7, subsection 2](#), interest or earnings on moneys deposited in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

2. A school ready children grants account is created in the fund under the authority of the director of the department. Moneys credited to the account are appropriated to and shall be



distributed by the department in the form of grants to early childhood Iowa areas pursuant to criteria established by the state board in accordance with law.

a. Moneys appropriated for deposit in the school ready children grants account for purposes of preschool tuition assistance shall be used for early care, health, and education programs to assist low-income parents with tuition for preschool and other supportive services for children ages three, four, and five who are not attending kindergarten in order to increase the basic family income eligibility requirement to not more than two hundred percent of the federal poverty level. In addition, if sufficient funding is available after addressing the needs of those who meet the basic income eligibility requirement, an early childhood Iowa area board may provide for eligibility for those with a family income in excess of the basic income eligibility requirement through use of a sliding scale or other copayment provisions.

b. Moneys appropriated for deposit in the school ready children grants account for purposes of family support services and parent education programs shall be targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five and shall be distributed using the distribution formula approved by the early childhood Iowa state board and shall be used by an early childhood Iowa area board only for family support services and parent education programs targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five.

3. Unless a different amount is authorized by law, up to five percent of the school ready children grant moneys distributed to an area board may be used by the area board for administrative costs.

4. a. An early childhood programs grant account is created in the fund under the authority of the director of the department. Moneys credited to the account are appropriated to and shall be distributed by the department in the form of grants to early childhood Iowa areas pursuant to criteria established by the state board in accordance with law. The criteria shall include but are not limited to a requirement that an early childhood Iowa area must be designated by the state board in order to be eligible to receive an early childhood programs grant.

b. An early childhood Iowa area receiving funding from the early childhood programs grant account shall comply with any federal reporting requirements associated with the use of that funding and other results and reporting requirements established by the state board. The department shall provide technical assistance in identifying and meeting the federal requirements. The availability of funding provided from the account is subject to changes in federal requirements and amendments to Iowa law.

c. The moneys distributed from the early childhood programs grant account shall be used by early childhood Iowa areas for the purposes of enhancing quality child care capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment. The moneys shall be used with a primary emphasis on low-income families and children from zero to age five. Moneys shall be provided in a flexible manner and shall be used to implement strategies identified by the early childhood Iowa area to achieve such purposes. The department may use a portion of the funding appropriated to the department under [this subsection](#) for provision of technical assistance and other support to the early childhood Iowa areas developing and implementing strategies with grant moneys distributed from the account.

d. Moneys from a federal block grant that are credited to the early childhood programs grant account but are not distributed to an early childhood Iowa area or otherwise remain unobligated or unexpended at the end of the fiscal year shall revert to the fund created in [section 8.41](#) to be available for appropriation by the general assembly in a subsequent fiscal year.

5. A first years first account is created in the fund under the authority of the department. The account shall consist of gift or grant moneys obtained from any source, including but not limited to the federal government. Moneys credited to the account are appropriated to the

department to be used for the early childhood-related purposes for which the moneys were received.

2010 Acts, ch 1031, §288; 2010 Acts, ch 1183, §19; 2015 Acts, ch 140, §14, 58, 59; 2016 Acts, ch 1113, §9; 2021 Acts, ch 170, §14; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1005 – 1007; 2023 Acts, ch 112, §53

Referred to in §256.163

Subsection 2, unnumbered paragraph 1 amended

Subsection 4, paragraphs a – c amended

Subsection 5 amended

### **256I.12 Early childhood stakeholders alliance.**

1. *Alliance created.* An early childhood stakeholders alliance is created to support the state board in addressing the early care, health, and education systems that affect children zero through age five in Iowa.

2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the early childhood stakeholders alliance is to oversee and provide broad input into the development of a high quality Iowa early childhood system that meets the needs of children zero through age five and their families and integrates the early care, health, and education systems. The alliance shall advise the governor, general assembly, state board, and other public and private policy bodies and service providers in coordinating activities throughout the state to fulfill its purpose.

3. *Vision statement.* All system development activities addressed by the early childhood stakeholders alliance shall be aligned around the following vision statement for the children of Iowa:

“Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.”

4. *Membership.* The early childhood stakeholders alliance membership shall include a representative of any organization that touches the lives of young children in the state zero through age five, has endorsed the purpose and vision statement for the alliance, has endorsed the guiding principles adopted by the alliance for the early childhood system, and has formally asked to be a member and remains actively engaged in alliance activities. The alliance shall work to ensure there is geographic, cultural, and ethnic diversity among the membership.

5. *Procedure.* Except as otherwise provided by law, the early childhood stakeholders alliance shall determine its own rules of procedure and operating provisions.

6. *Steering committee.* The early childhood stakeholders alliance shall operate with a steering committee to organize, manage, and coordinate the activities of the alliance and its component groups. The steering committee may act on behalf of the alliance as necessary. The steering committee membership shall consist of the co-chairpersons of the alliance’s component groups, the administrator of the early childhood Iowa program, and other leaders designated by the alliance.

7. *Component groups.* The early childhood stakeholders alliance shall maintain component groups to address the key components of the Iowa early childhood system. Each component group shall have one private and one public agency co-chairperson. The alliance may change the component groups as deemed necessary by the alliance. The component groups shall implement the strategic plan created pursuant to [section 256I.4](#).

8. *Duties.* The early childhood stakeholders alliance duties shall include but are not limited to all of the following regarding the Iowa early childhood system:

a. Coordinate with the early childhood Iowa state board.

b. Serve as the state advisory council required under the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-134, as designated by the governor.

9. *Staffing.* Staff support for the early childhood stakeholders alliance shall be provided by the department.

2010 Acts, ch 1031, §289; 2018 Acts, ch 1026, §78; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1008

Referred to in §256I.4

Subsections 6 and 7 amended

### **256I.13 Family support program — funding intent.**

1. In order to implement the legislative intent stated in [sections 135.106](#) and [256I.9](#), that priority for family support program funding be given to programs using evidence-based or promising models for family support, it is the intent of the general assembly that ninety

percent of state funds expended for family support programs shall be used for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining ten percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

2. For the purposes of [this section](#), unless the context otherwise requires or unless otherwise provided under federal law:

a. “*Evidence-based program*” means a program that is based on scientific evidence demonstrating that the program model is effective. An evidence-based program shall be reviewed on site and compared to program model standards by the model developer or the developer’s designee at least every five years to ensure that the program continues to maintain fidelity with the program model. The program model shall have had demonstrated significant and sustained positive outcomes in an evaluation utilizing a well-designed and rigorous randomized controlled research design or a quasi-experimental research design, and the evaluation results shall have been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

b. “*Family support programs*” includes group-based parent education or home visiting programs that are designed to strengthen protective factors, including parenting skills, increasing parental knowledge of child development, and increasing family functioning and problem solving skills. A family support program may be used as an early intervention strategy to improve birth outcomes, parental knowledge, family economic success, the home learning environment, family and child involvement with others, and coordination with other community resources. A family support program may have a specific focus on preventing child maltreatment or ensuring children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school.

c. “*Promising program*” means a program that meets all of the following requirements:

(1) The program conforms to a clear, consistent family support model that has been in existence for at least three years.

(2) The program is grounded in relevant empirically based knowledge.

(3) The program is linked to program-determined outcomes.

(4) The program is associated with a national or state organization that either has comprehensive program standards that ensure high-quality service delivery and continuous program quality improvement or the program model has demonstrated through the program’s benchmark outcomes that the program has achieved significant positive outcomes equivalent to those achieved by program models with published significant and sustained results in a peer-reviewed journal.

(5) The program has been awarded the Iowa family support credential and has been reviewed on site at least every five years to ensure the program’s adherence to the Iowa family support standards approved by the state board or a comparable set of standards. The on-site review is completed by an independent review team that is not associated with the program or the organization administering the program.

3. a. The data reporting requirements adopted by the state board pursuant to [section 256I.4](#) for the family support programs targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five and funded through the state board shall require the programs to participate in a state-administered internet-based data collection system. The state board’s annual report submitted each January to the governor and general assembly under [section 256I.4](#) shall include family support program outcomes.

b. The data on families served that is collected by the family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative shall include but is not limited to basic demographic information, services received, funding utilized, and program outcomes for the children and families served. The state board shall adopt performance benchmarks for the family support programs.

c. The state board shall identify minimum competency standards for the employees and supervisors of family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative.

d. The state board shall adopt criminal and child abuse record check requirements for the employees and supervisors of family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative.

e. The state board shall develop a plan to implement a coordinated intake and referral

process for publicly funded family support programs in order to engage the families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five in all communities in the state.

[2013 Acts, ch 141, §13](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1113, §10](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §1009, 1010](#)

Subsection 1 amended

Subsection 3, paragraphs b and e amended