

CHAPTER 121
EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE
[Prior to 6/14/23, see Early Childhood Iowa State Board[249] Ch 1]

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 7/1/30

441—121.1(256I) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions apply:

“*Community partners*” means individuals, early childhood service providers, and staff of other programs or agencies who communicate, coordinate and collaborate with an area board.

“*Designation*” means the status awarded by the state board to an early childhood Iowa area meeting the criteria established by the state board.

“*Early childhood Iowa area*” or “*area*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 256I.1.

“*Early childhood Iowa area board*” or “*area board*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 256I.1.

“*Early childhood Iowa fund*” means a fund created in the state treasury from which moneys are distributed to early childhood Iowa areas for the purpose of supporting children and their families.

“*Early childhood Iowa office*” means a state unit within the department to coordinate the early childhood Iowa initiative.

“*Early childhood Iowa state board*” or “*state board*” means the state of Iowa’s early childhood Iowa board as appointed by the governor that meets the membership criteria of citizens and state agency directors as voting members and legislators as nonvoting members.

“*Evidence-based*” means that a program has completed a randomized control trial conducted by an independent researcher and has demonstrated positive results for children and families. “Evidence-based” may also include research conducted by the program that has been published in a peer-reviewed journal that also demonstrates positive results for children and families. To be evidence-based, the program must include stringent standards for program replication including standards for implementation and monitoring to ensure that the program is being operated with fidelity to the original model.

“*Indicator*” means a measure that indirectly quantifies the achievement of a result.

“*Result*” means the effect desired for Iowans.

“*State agency*” means a department of the executive branch including but not limited to the departments of economic development, education, health and human services, and workforce development.

[ARC 9150C, IAB 4/30/25, effective 7/1/25]

441—121.2(256I) Early childhood Iowa state board responsibility.

121.2(1) The state board will provide leadership and coordination for the development of Iowa’s early care, health and education system in cooperation with area boards, community partners and other state agencies.

121.2(2) The state board will:

a. Develop and implement a process for designating area boards. The state board will review the process at the close of each designation cycle.

b. Adopt state-level indicators with input from area boards. The state board will report on indicators each fiscal year and compare the data against baseline data and data from prior fiscal years as available. Indicators will measure all result areas of the early care, health and education system.

c. Adopt minimum standards to promote equal access to services subject to the authority of the area boards.

d. Adopt guidelines and standards for services provided under a school ready children grant. All guidelines and standards will be found in the online toolkit available on department’s official website.

e. Further the development of an early childhood integrated data system across state agencies and other partners.

f. Develop guidance to identify and improve the quality of services in early care, health and education programs, including evidence-based practices.

g. Promote other measures to advance the initiative.

[ARC 9150C, IAB 4/30/25, effective 7/1/25]

441—121.3(256I) Early childhood Iowa coordination staff. In consultation with the state board, the department will provide fiscal oversight of the early childhood Iowa initiative. The fiscal oversight measures are defined in 441—Chapter 122.

[ARC 9150C, IAB 4/30/25, effective 7/1/25]

441—121.4(256I) Early childhood Iowa areas.

121.4(1) The state board will approve early childhood Iowa area boundaries and the creation of area boards. Minimum criteria for areas and approval of area boards are set forth in Iowa Code section 256I.6.

121.4(2) The state board may waive any of the minimum criteria referenced in Iowa Code section 256I.6, if it is determined that exceptional circumstances exist. The state board further defines exceptional circumstances to include when the proposed change of boundaries creates hardship that reduces performance or quality of services within the area. The area board must provide compelling documentation of the hardship and clearly document the impact to performance or quality of services or both.

[ARC 9150C, IAB 4/30/25, effective 7/1/25]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 256I.1 through 256I.11.

[Filed ARC 9346B (Notice ARC 9137B, IAB 10/6/10), IAB 1/26/11, effective 3/2/11]

[Filed ARC 0179C (Notice ARC 0058C, IAB 4/4/12), IAB 6/27/12, effective 8/1/12]

[Filed ARC 3249C (Notice ARC 3011C, IAB 4/12/17), IAB 8/2/17, effective 9/6/17]

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