
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA STATE BOARD — APRIL 2020

Meeting. The Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) State Board met on April 3, 2020, using video conferencing. The Board introduced new Board members, elected new Board leadership, and approved Board bylaws. There were also Board member comments about the increase in participation at Early Childhood Iowa Area Board (ECIA) meetings and the need to be alert to potential budget impacts because of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Impact on Family Support Services. Multiple State agencies including ECI, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Education (DE) have collaborated to coordinate protocols and issue guidance in response to COVID-19. In accordance with that guidance, family support service programs have been using teleconferencing when possible to facilitate home visits. Teleconferencing visits, as opposed to telephone calls, are preferred to maintain face-to-face connections when possible. The lack of computer hardware for families impacts the ability to have teleconference visits, and the closure of libraries has led to the loss of Internet access to many families.

Request for Carryforward Limit Change. ECIA Boards are allowed to carry forward a maximum of 20.0% of the current fiscal year's School Ready Children Grant Program funding into the succeeding fiscal year in accordance with Iowa Code section [256I.9](#). ECIA Boards are allowed to carry forward a maximum of 20.0% of Early Childhood Iowa funding in accordance with the policy adopted by the ECI State Board. Because of COVID-19, operations of some programs and services funded by ECIA Boards have been reduced and less funding is currently being expended, which may cause some ECIA Boards to be above the 20.0% threshold at the end of FY 2020. Although there may be a temporary reduction in expenditures, it is anticipated that child care facilities will need additional assistance as facilities begin to reopen or adapt to community needs.

To allow flexibility in spending, the ECI State Board approved raising the FY 2020 allowed carryforward percentage from 20.0% to 35.0% for both the School Ready Children Grant Program funding and the Early Childhood Iowa funding. The ECI State Board has forwarded this decision to the office of Governor Kim Reynolds for review and has requested that an Executive Order be issued granting exception to Iowa Code section 256I.9 in lieu of legislation due to the current suspension of the Legislative Session.

ECIA Boards Budget Considerations. ECIA Boards are strategizing with community partners and leaders on how best to address priorities and support programming in response to COVID-19. As services are being adapted, ECIA Boards may need to consider changes in their budget and use of funding. The ECI State Office is providing guidance and responding to requests from ECIA Boards. The ECI Technical Assistance Team is providing additional opportunities to learn from other ECI areas and to hear from additional sources on emerging issues and needs.

Board Recognition. The ECI State Board recognized and thanked exiting chairman David Arens for his service and leadership.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the ECI State Board is scheduled for Friday, June 5, 2020.

LSA Staff Contact: Lora Vargason (515.725.2249) lora.vargason@legis.iowa.gov

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