



# Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad  
Governor

Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

OCT 2 2013

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad  
Governor  
State Capitol  
LOCAL

Dear Governor Branstad:

Enclosed please find a copy of a report to the General Assembly relative to the Family Support Subsidy and the Children at Home program for Fiscal Year 2013.

This annual report was prepared pursuant to directive contained in Iowa Code 225C.42.

Sincerely,

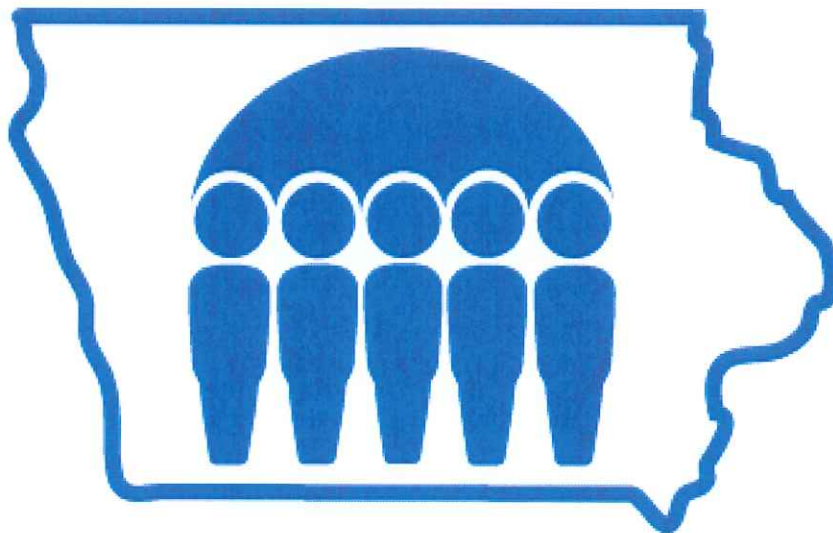
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles M. Palmer" followed by some initials.

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

CMP:cr

Enclosure

# Iowa Department of Human Services



## *Family Support Subsidy and Children at Home Programs SFY 2013*

September 30, 2013

# Annual Evaluation of the Family Support Subsidy and Children at Home Programs FY 2013

## Family Support Subsidy Program

### Background:

The Family Support Subsidy (FSS) program provides a monthly payment to help families with the cost of raising a child with a developmental disability. Parents of children with disabilities were very active in getting state and federal policy makers to look at how they could divert some of the funds going to institutional care. Families with severely disabled children wanted to raise their children at home but were met with a lot of resistance and policy barriers when they tried to get home-based support.

These families actively encouraged state policy makers to divert some of the funds going to institutional care toward a program that would let them care for their children at home. Implemented in 1988, and using 100% state funds, the Family Support Subsidy (FSS) program provides a monthly payment to help families with the cost of raising a child with a developmental disability.

Later legislation established a comprehensive family support council to work in conjunction with the department in determining the subsidy amount each year, making improvements to the program and completing this annual evaluation.

### Ending the Family Support Subsidy:

The legislature directed the Department of Human Services (DHS) to stop accepting new applicants for the Family Support Subsidy effective July 1, 2010. This decision was based on the determination that since the time when the Family Support Subsidy began there has been a significant expansion of the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program. Many of the needs that were intended to be addressed by the Family Support Subsidy could be more adequately met by the Medicaid Waiver program. Medicaid has the additional benefit of a federal match letting the state funds reach more eligible children.

The number of children in the Family Support Subsidy will continue to decline until all the children who are currently in the program turn 18.

The Comprehensive Family Support Council has been eliminated. This council served to help determine funding for the Family Support Subsidy. Beginning in FY12, the Family Support Subsidy began operating off a scripted formula for increasing yearly payment amounts for families. This combined with the elimination of the program when the last, current child reaches 18 served to eliminate the need for a council. The Children at Home program has local councils which attend to each individual program.

## Where We Are Today:

For SFY 14 the program provides a monthly payment to families of \$285. Families with income below \$40,000 (adjusted gross income) can qualify for this program. About half of the families served through the Family Support Subsidy earn less than \$20,000/year.

## Number of Children Served in the FSS Program:

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children in FSS	333	297	250	214

## Family Support Subsidy Survey Results:

Of the families who renewed the Family Support Subsidy for the next year, 96% of those who responded to the survey question expressed satisfaction with the program. None of those responding indicated dissatisfaction with the program.

How would you rate your satisfaction with the FSS program?	# of responses	Percent of total
Satisfied	158	96%
Neutral	2	1%
Dissatisfied	0	NA
Did not answer	4	2%
TOTALS	164	

The top five ways in which the families used the subsidy were:

1. Transportation (85%)
2. Recreation (78%)
3. Special Foods (48%)
4. Adaptive Equipment (45%)
5. Respite Care (44%)

Other ways in which the families used the subsidy monies included parent training, insurance, counseling and home modifications.

## Children at Home Program

### Background

The Children at Home (CAH) program began in 1996 as a pilot program. Three urban and three rural Decategorization clusters were chosen as the pilot sites for the program. The program serves as a payer of last resort designed to assist families in securing the services and supports they identify as necessary in helping their children remain at home.

The program provides cash assistance to families of children with developmental disabilities. These funds are provided on an as needed basis and are distributed through agencies awarded CAH contracts. The funds help families with expenses not covered by other programs or during emergencies when it would take too long to apply for assistance through other means. Decisions on how to distribute funding is made with the assistance of local parent councils. Families use CAH funds to pay for respite, summer camps, adaptive equipment, educational software, home modifications, special diets and special training.

**Current status of the CAH program:**

The Children at Home program currently covers 19 counties. Two additional programs will be added in SFY 14. The SFY14 appropriation bill was at a level that would support the FSS program at the reduced participation rate as kids age out and allow for 2 additional CAH programs.

**Number of Children Served in the CAH Program:**

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children in CAH	600	467	826	571

**Children at Home Survey Results:**

81% of the families participating in the program in SFY13 completed a survey. 100% of the respondents expressed that they were “Satisfied” with the program. 74% of the respondents indicated that they were “Very Satisfied” with the program. None of those responding indicated dissatisfaction with the program.

Possible Answers	# of responses	Percent of total
Very Satisfied	341	74%
Satisfied	121	26%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Not Satisfied At All	0	0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>462</b>	

**Program Recommendations**

The department, through the Council of Human Services approved budget submission for state fiscal year 2015, is recommending continued expansion of the CAH program as the FSS program is being reduced. The FSS program met a vital need while waivers were being introduced and expanded. However, CAH has historically been very successful in helping more families by connecting them with local and state programs. The CAH program also benefits parents through the formation of local parent councils that serve as conduits for parents to have a voice in implementing services in their community.

The department will work to increase the number of contracts by 2 in SFY2014 and by 1 in SFY2015. This will allow the program to expand into 2-4 additional counties. Funding for this expansion will come from the Comprehensive Family Support Subsidy dollars freed up by the children who have aged out of the Family Support Subsidy.