



Iowa Department of Education

Child Development Coordinating Council

Shared Visions Annual Report

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Iowa Department of Education

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Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Introduction

The Iowa Child Development Coordinating Council (CDCC) presents this report in fulfilling the requirement to annually submit recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on the need for investment in child development services.¹ CDCC advises and assists the Department of Education regarding the administration and implementation of state funded at-risk programs for children ages birth to five. The DE administers two programs: the Shared Visions Parent Support Program and the Shared Visions Preschool Program.

The mission of CDCC is to advocate for Iowa's children and families and support model comprehensive child development and parent support programs for at-risk children and their families. CDCC ensures the development, delivery, and promotion of quality, family-centered comprehensive early childhood services through:²

- established minimum guidelines for comprehensive early child development services for at-risk 3 - and 4-year-old children;
- the establishment of parent support programs to enhance the skills of parents in providing for the learning and development of their children;
- cost-effective child development services for at-risk 3- and 4-year-old children;
- comprehensive services such as child care, transportation, family support and education, developmental screening, and referral to health professionals; and
- equity of access to these services for all Iowa's children and their families.

Parent Support Programs

The Shared Visions Parent Support programs include:

- Family support programs for high-risk children in approximately 15 Iowa counties (for families with incomes below 130% of the poverty level);
- Twelve grantees located in area education agencies, public schools, Head Start and private non-profit agencies. The grantees collaborate with local Community Empowerment Area Boards, local child care, Area Education Agencies, and school districts; and
- Individual and/or group opportunities for families to obtain information focusing on parenting skills, child growth and development, building of self-concept, nutrition, positive guidance techniques, family resource management, and parent literacy, and accessing the array of supportive services from a network of agencies that are available to families with young children who are at risk.

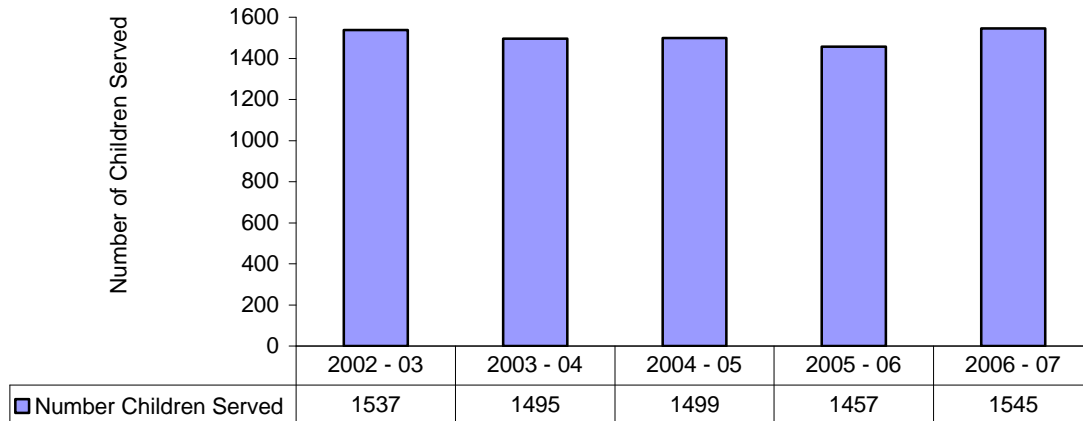
Funding. In 2006-2007, state funds of \$727,106 provided twelve Parent Support Programs serving 1,545 children birth to 3 years of age and their families. The 2007 Legislature allocated \$815,259 for the SFY 2008.

¹ IAC 256A, IAC 279.51, and IAC 281

² IAC 256A

Children Served. Figure 1 shows a 5 year trend of enrollment and the decline and then increase in enrollment the past year. Approximately three-quarters of the children qualified for Shared Visions based upon poverty, the remaining children qualified with other risk factors. A total of 2,376 children were served during the calendar year.

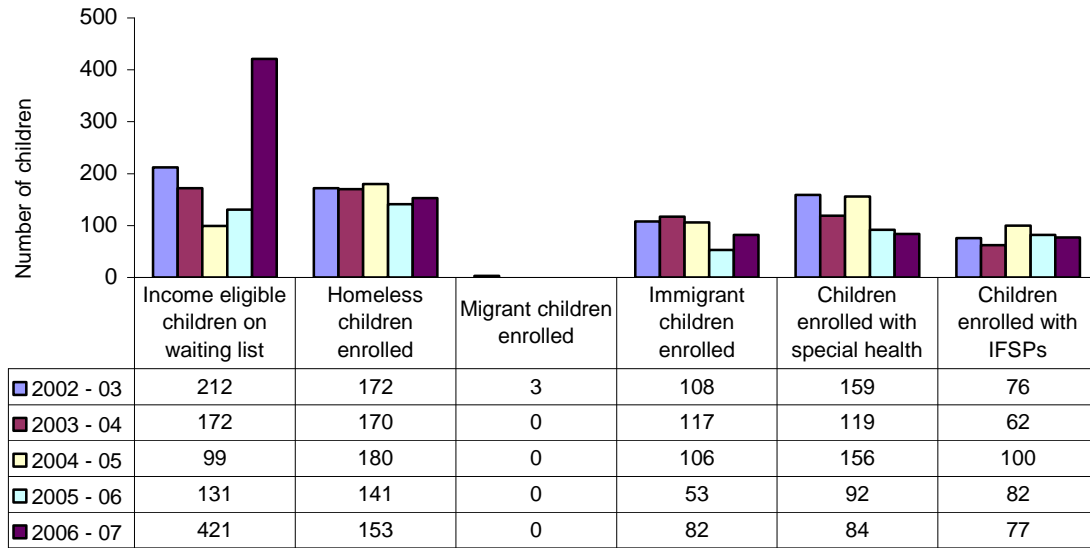
Figure 1. Number of Children Served by Shared Visions Parent Support Programs.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

Figure 2 describes the characteristics of children served in Shared Vision Parent Support Programs, as well as eligible children on the waiting list. As indicated by the figure, the children served by Shared Vision Parent Support Programs have multiple risk factors. The figure shows the number of children and change risk factors over time. This also demonstrates the increasing need for parent support as evidenced by the number of income eligible children on the waiting list. In 2006-2007, 421 children were on the waiting list.

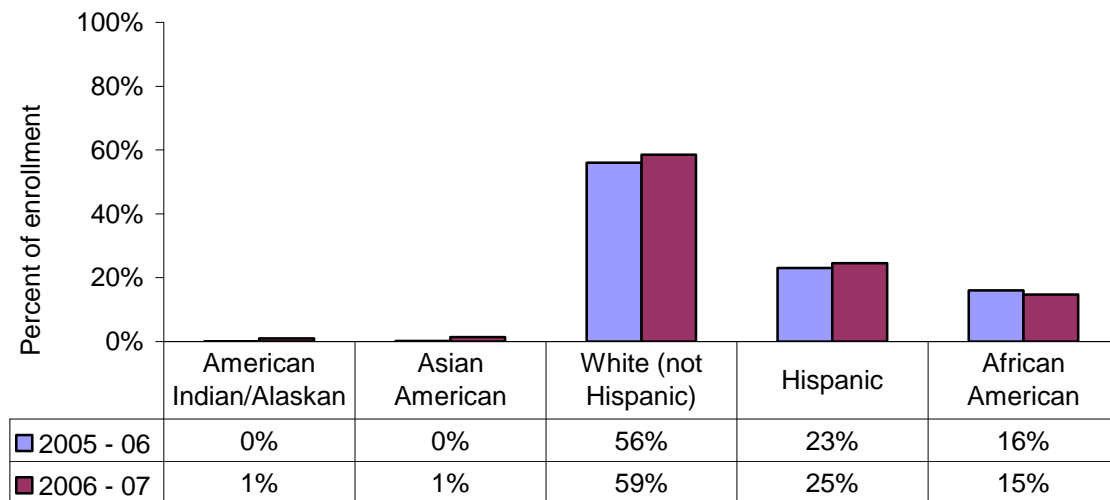
Figure 2. Demographic Information for Children Served in Parent Support Programs.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

The race/ethnicity representation was analyzed for the same categories used for reporting district data for *No Child left Behind* (see Figure 3). Overall, the ethnic representation of state enrollment for the Parent Support programs has been consistent from year to year. Additionally, the gender of children was analyzed and 54 percent were male and 47 percent female.

Figure 3. Percent of children Served in Parent Support Programs by Race/Ethnicity.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

Results. The Shared Visions Parent Support programs contribute to Iowa results.

Healthy Children. All of the children participating in the Shared Visions Parent Support programs received all of their immunizations. Approximately 1,405 or 90 percent of the children served had health insurance. In 2005, only 87 percent of the children served had insurance.

Safe and Supportive Communities. Shared Visions Parent Support Programs report a decrease in the percentage of children experiencing abuse and neglect.

Secure and Nurturing Families. Shared Visions Parent Support Programs report decreases in domestic and family violence.

Future Needs

The impact of the Shared Visions Parent Support programs would be increased by:

- Provide funding to support additional sites and increase the level of contact hours for families. No additional communities in Iowa have been provided the opportunity to apply for Shared Visions at-risk state funds since 1996.
- Provide funding for a comprehensive evaluation of the programs and outcomes for children.
- Provide a cost of living allowance to support and maintain adequate quality of Parent Support Program staff.
- Provide funding to support professional development of Parent Support Program staff; no funding has ever been designated.
- Meet the needs of families on the waiting list.

Preschool Programs

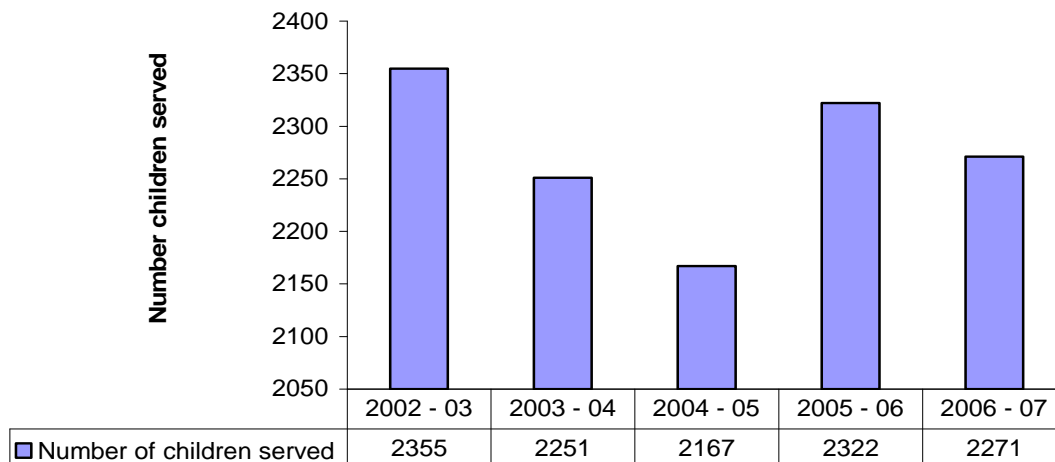
Iowa Shared Visions Preschool programs include:

- High quality child development programs for children ages three to five years of age who are at high risk for later success in school and life for families who have an income below 130 percent of the poverty level;
- Collaborative partnerships between local Community Empowerment Area Boards, Head Start, childcare, and school districts in 51 Iowa counties;
- A high level of accountability, documented extensive data collection, a history of established programming in the community with highly trained staff; and
- Programming in diverse settings to support community need and family choice.

Funding. In 2006-2007, state funds of \$6,887,531 provided 109 preschool grants supporting approximately 129 classrooms (49 fully funded classrooms and 80 partially funded classrooms) for children three to five-years of age. The state funding only supports half of the actual expenses needed to keep programs operating at this time. The 2006 Legislature allocated \$7,721,481 for the SFY 2008. (Data for SFY 2008 will be reflected in the 2007-2008 report).

Children Served. Preschool services were provided to 2,271 children. The number of children served has decreased the past 3 years. In 2005, the legislature allocated funds to the Iowa Empowerment Office for preschool programming support for low-income families. Local empowerment boards allocated some of these funds to Shared Visions Preschool. At this time, 1,434 eligible children remain on the waiting list. In 2005-2006, 1,645 children were on the waiting list. It is anticipated the increase in funds may reduce the waiting list in 2007-2008.

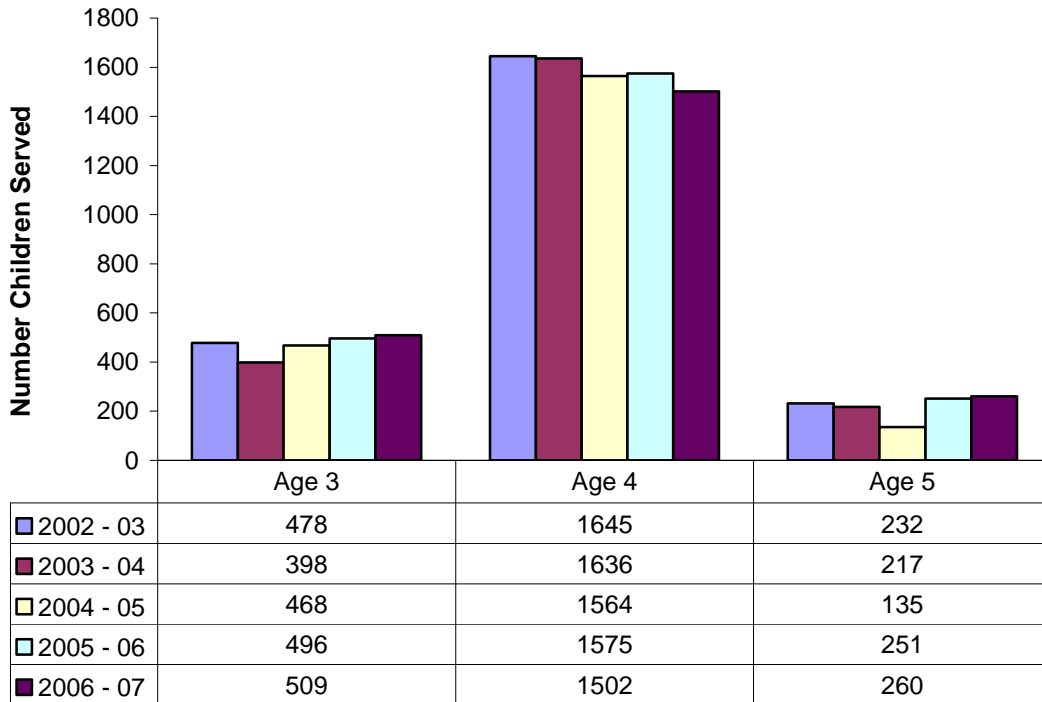
Figure 4. Number of Children Served in Shared Visions Preschool Programs.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

Shared Visions Preschool Programs serve primarily four-year-olds (see Figure 5). The number of three-year-olds has increased during the past three years.

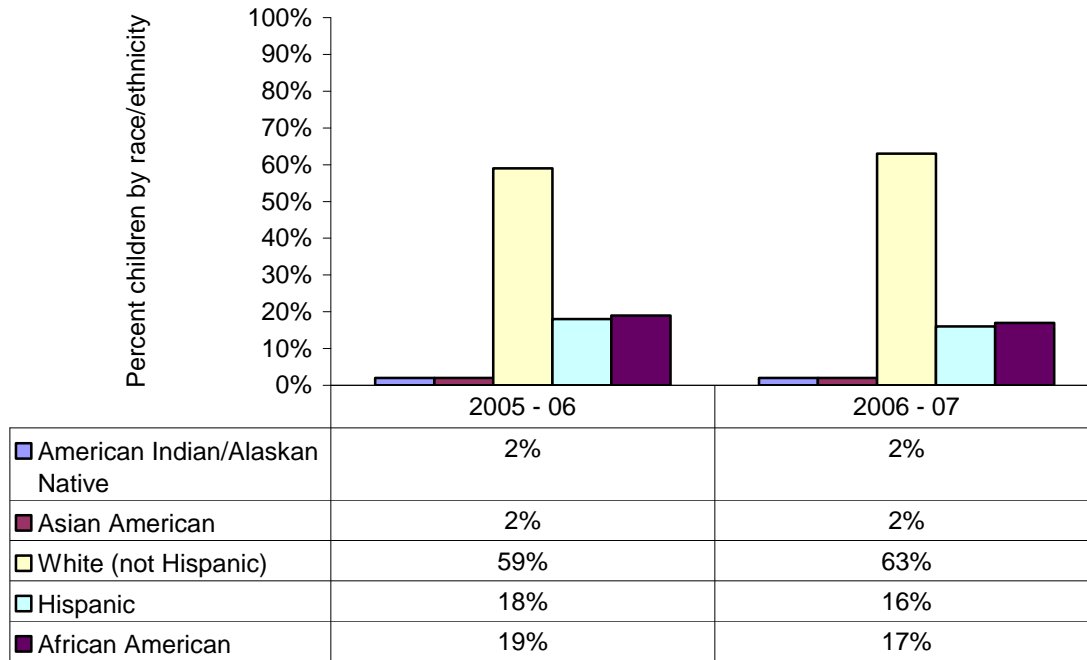
Figure 5. Number and Age of Children Served in Shared Visions Preschool Programs.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

About 92 percent of the children qualifying for the Shared Visions Preschool Programs are at-risk due to poverty with the remaining children qualifying due to other at-risk factors. Figure 6 indicates enrollment by race/ethnicity. The preschool programs are serving an increasingly diverse population.

Figure 6. Shared Visions Preschool Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity.



Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, CDCC Shared Visions Grant Year End Report, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 Summary.

The National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Preschool Quality Checklist was used to compare the strengths of the comprehensive Shared Visions Preschool Programs. As shown by Table 1, the Shared Visions Preschools met six of the 10 standards.

Table 1. National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Preschool Quality Standards Checklist.

Shared Visions Preschool Policy	Benchmark	Met Benchmark
Early Learning Standards	Comprehensive	Yes
Teacher Degree	BA	No policy
Teacher Specialized Training	Endorsement in Early Childhood	No policy
Assistant Teacher Degree	CDA or equivalent	No policy
Teacher Inservice	At least 15 hours per year	No policy
Maximum Class Size	20 or lower	Yes
Staff Child Ratio	1:10 or better	Yes
Required Screening/Referral and Support Services	Vision, hearing, health, and at least 1 support service	Yes
Meals	At least one per day	Yes
Required Monitoring	Site visits	Yes

The following summaries describe the policy and why or how the Shared Vision Preschool Programs meet or don't meet the benchmark for each policy.

Early Learning Standards: The Shared Visions preschool programs implement the Iowa Early Learning Standards (ELS). These child standards are comprehensive and cover all areas of child development. The DE has provided training on comprehensive curriculum that addresses the ELS. National experts on math and science curriculum have provided training addressing the ELS.

Teacher Degree and Specialized Training: Iowa Administrative Code³ does not require teachers to have a degree. In practice, approximately 70% of the Shared Visions teachers have a degree and hold a teaching license. Many of the teachers have specialized training and hold an endorsement in early childhood.

Assistant Teacher Degree: Iowa Administrative Code does not require teachers to have a certificate or degree. The Shared Visions preschool program must be accredited by

³Iowa Administrative Code is located at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=645&Itemid=608

the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The program standards and criteria require teaching assistants to hold a Child Development Associate credential, Associate of Art degree in an early childhood field or have twelve hours of college credit.

Teacher Inservice: Iowa Administrative Code does not require ongoing teacher inservice. Individuals holding a teaching license are required to take 6 hours every 5 years.

Maximum Class Size: Iowa Administrative Code does not dictate class size. However, the National Association of Education of Young Children Program Standards and Criteria dictate no more than 20 children in a class.

Staff Child Ratio: Iowa Administrative Code requires a 1 to 8 ratio.

Required Screening/Referral and Support Services: Iowa Administrative Code does not require screening and referral. However, the NAEYC Program Standards and Criteria do require these services be performed.

Meals: Iowa Administrative Code does not require meals for children. However, the NAEYC Program Standards and Criteria provide guidance regarding nutritious meals and snacks when children are in preschool for 2 hours or more.

Required Monitoring: Iowa Administrative Code does requires programs to report progress toward their goals. In addition, NAEYC conducts an onsite visit to assess the compliance with the Program Standards and Criteria every 5 years or sooner when circumstances indicate a monitoring visit is necessary.

Results: The Shared Visions Preschool programs contribute to Iowa results.

Healthy Children. All of the children participating in the Shared Visions Preschool Programs received all of their immunizations. Approximately 2,084 or 92 percent of the children served had health insurance representing a 1% increase in health insurance rates.

Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments. Shared Visions Preschool Programs are accredited by NAEYC, the national standard of highest quality early childhood programs strive to achieve.

Children Ready to Succeed in School

A two-year research study was conducted to evaluate the Shared Vision Preschool Programs. (This is a requirement of the Iowa Administration Code to evaluate these programs.) Results of the evaluation and study indicated:

- Shared Visions Preschool Programs having 5 or more community partners was strongly related to overall classroom quality.
- Eighty percent of the preschool programs used a research based curriculum that aligns with the Iowa Early Learning Standards and a research based child assessment.

- Research indicates enrolled children in high quality classrooms scored significantly higher than children enrolled in lower quality classrooms. Findings regarding the relationship between program quality and child outcomes confirmed expectations that high-quality curriculum leads to better outcomes for children. Although all of these programs could be considered good based on their achievement of NAEYC accreditation, distinctions can be made among them.
- Findings regarding child development outcomes suggest that the majority of children served by the Shared Visions Preschool Programs are making satisfactory progress. However, the results provide evidence that children's developmental progress must be monitored closely and that collaboration efforts between the Shared Visions Preschool Programs and early childhood special education programs must be further strengthened. Several children scored far enough outside of developmental expectations to warrant concern.

Future Needs

Findings that child outcomes in the area of language development favored the children in the highest quality programs suggests that more can be done to assist teachers in providing the best possible educational programs that will support at-risk children's optimal development. Overall, these findings provide strong argument for ongoing efforts to enhance overall classroom quality, strengthen curricular offerings, and enhance teachers' competence within the Shared Visions Preschool Programs.

The DE is striving to maintain quality preschool programs through ongoing professional development based on the Iowa Professional Development Model. Professional development funds to support preschool teachers implementing program standards aligned with curriculum and assessment will be critical to increasing quality of preschool programs for children.