



*2017  
Annual Report*

*Every Child, Beginning at Birth, Will be Healthy and Successful*



# Introduction

This report is in response to Iowa Code sections 256I.4(11) and 256I.13 which requires the Early Childhood Iowa State Board to submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly in January of each year that includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Updates to the strategic plan
- b. The status and results of the Early Childhood Iowa Initiative's 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 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. Data and common performance measures addressed by the strategic plan, which shall include but is not limited to funding amounts
- f. Indicators addressed by the strategic plan along with associated data trends and their source
- g. Family support program outcomes

To access the electronic version of this report and supplemental information [click here](#). If you have questions or want additional information as you review this report, contact:

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# Letter from the Chair

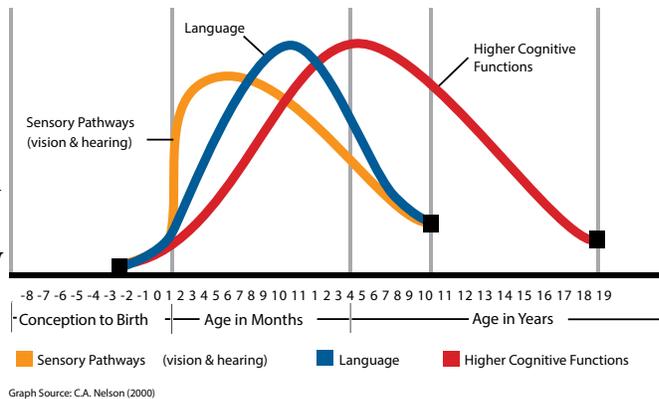
Dear Governor Reynolds and members of the Iowa General Assembly:

It is my pleasure to provide the Early Childhood Iowa 2017 Annual Report. The report is in response to Iowa Code sections 256I.4(11) and 256I.13 which requires the Early Childhood Iowa State Board to submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly in January of each year that provides an update and data on the initiative.

The Early Childhood Iowa Initiative is unique in our state in three ways:

- It is the only area in state government that focuses exclusively on our youngest Iowan's and their families;
- It is a partnership between state government and local communities to identify community strengths, needs and gaps in services and identify ways to address the gaps locally; and
- It promotes collaboration at the state level among the six state departments and the private sector that are part of the Early Childhood Iowa structure.

The focus of Early Childhood Iowa is reflected in our vision, *“Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.”* Children's early years are crucial for brain development and learning, and have lifelong impacts on intellectual ability, social functioning and emotional well-being. In the first three years of life, a child's brain is the most impressionable, forming more than one million new neural connections every second. This process in developing the brain's architecture affects how well the different parts of the brain connect and communicate.



As numerous research studies and brain science research over the last twenty years have shown, investing in high quality birth-to-five programs has the greatest return on investment in terms of higher graduation rates, reduced crime, higher earnings and better long-term health outcomes. These outcomes affect our state's workforce and economy today based on the needs of working families and our future workforce and economy in the years that follow as these children grow into adulthood. From Dawn Larson, Economic Development Specialist for the City of Fort Dodge, *“Child care is an essential part of the infrastructure for economic development. It is an essential support service for our business and industry. It is the key to a strong, thriving community and the success of our future workforce.”*

In an analysis of data from a 30-year longitudinal study of a high quality birth-to-five program for disadvantaged children in North Carolina, Dr. James Heckman, Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor in Economics and Nobel Laureate in economics, calculated a *13% return on investment* for children participating in the program. The economic return was achieved through a wide variety of life outcomes, such as health, quality of life, participation in crime, labor income, IQ, schooling and increases in mothers' labor income as a result of subsidized child care. When we look at both the public and private sectors, very few investments have that high of a return rate.

I appreciate your time in reviewing this report and looking forward to conversations with you about the Early Childhood Iowa Initiative. Please reach out to me through the Early Childhood Iowa State Office with any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Dave Arens, Board Chair

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# What is Early Childhood Iowa?

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) is Iowa's early childhood system and includes a network of 38 local ECI area boards that serve all 99 Iowa counties. The Early Childhood Iowa State Board through the ECI State Office leads the initiative to ensure fiscal and programmatic accountability, and coordinates state-level early childhood systems work to create better outcomes for young children and their families.

Children are born ready to learn and extraordinary development happens from prenatal through age five. During this time of rapid brain growth, access to experiences and environments that foster healthy brain development happen through engaged parent-child interactions, quality child care, preschool and healthcare. At birth, a child's brain is not born fully built. It is constructed through interactive influences of his or her genes and experiences which form the bedrock for lifelong health, intellectual ability, emotional well-being, and social functioning. When we provide parents and families, child care

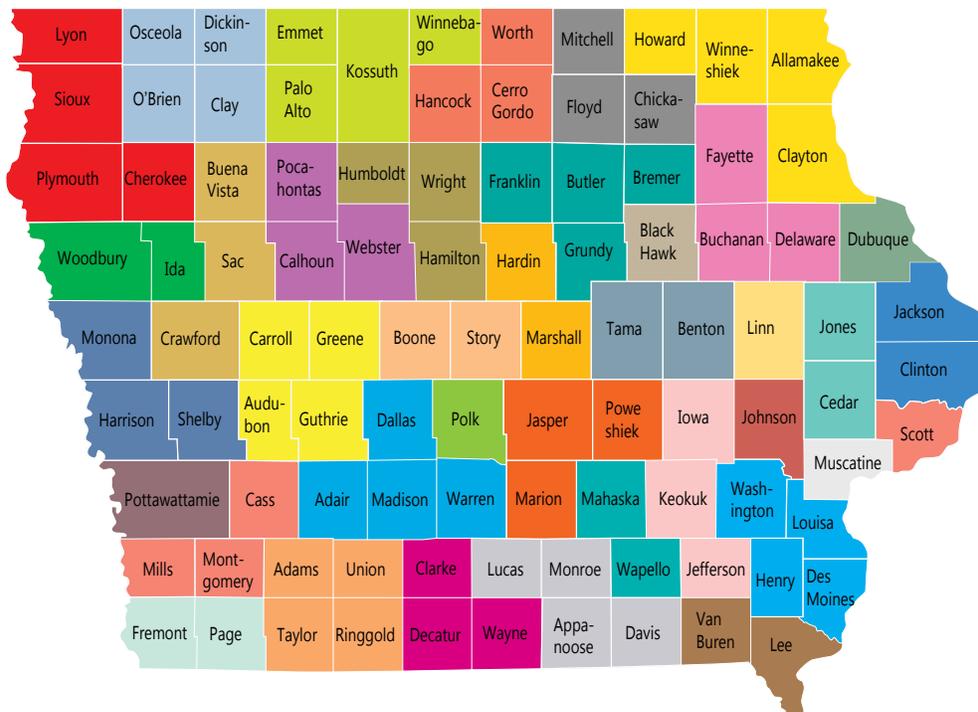
providers, preschool teachers, and communities with the tools and resources they need so that every child is nurtured and cared for beginning prenatally, we ensure quality early childhood learning opportunities and healthy brain development.

ECI brings communities together – parents; child care, human service and health care providers; educators; business people; and the faith community – to identify strengths, needs and gaps in services in the community. Through the identification of the community's gaps in services, ECI area boards provide tools and resources to fully engage young children in learning opportunities so they can grow to be healthy, productive and well-rounded students, parents, workers and leaders.

ECI's structure establishes a system for statewide governance and innovation with local inspiration that works in communities across our state.

Serving children prenatal through age five, ECI works across the state to strengthen families, increase access and raise the quality of child care and preschools, and improve child health and development. Some ECI area boards also make decisions related to other state, local and private funding such as Decategorization, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, and community foundations.

*For ECI Area contact information click on the map.*



# How Early Childhood Iowa Works

So, what do we mean when we say “an early childhood system?” In general terms, a system is a set of interrelated parts that interact and function together to produce a common outcome. An early childhood system encompasses an array of separate, more targeted systems, including health, education and human services, which have the common goal of achieving better outcomes for children and families.

These systems have multiple programs, policies, and agencies at the state and local level. The goal of the early childhood system is to work collaboratively to help families get the care and support they need for their children in the most efficient and effective way possible.

ECI brings together perspectives from the Departments of Education, Health, Human Rights, Human Services, Workforce Development and the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the private sector in the continuous improvement process of strengthening Iowa’s early childhood system. The work is accomplished through component groups that include: governance, planning and administration; results accountability; professional development; quality services and programs; public engagement; and resources and funding. To learn more about the work of the ECI Component Groups [click here](#). To see a visualization of the ECI system structure [click here](#).

At the state level, ECI works to ensure data driven results and accountability for the entire system, as well as making sure that state investments are producing strong outcomes for young children. In addition, continuous fiscal and quality monitoring ensures effectiveness and continued innovation. This includes:

- Training ECI area board members and staff on their roles and responsibilities, data-informed decision making and board development
- Monitoring ECI area boards to ensure compliance with state laws, legislative mandates and state policies

- Guiding ECI area boards toward the selection and implementation of evidence-based, evidenced-informed or promising practices programs to achieve the best outcomes for children
- Reviewing programs at the local level to ensure services are targeting and addressing the unique community needs, and not duplicative of other investments
- Facilitating the sharing of resources, innovative ideas and solutions among ECI area boards so that boards benefit from a collective knowledge
- Collecting programmatic data that identifies the performance of funded programs and services
- Disaggregating and providing county level data on measures of child well-being

In local communities, ECI area boards have the flexibility to use data-informed decision making to improve the health, development, and well-being of children based on the needs and resources in their communities. ECI area boards support the needs of families and children during a critical developmental period using state, and in some areas, local and private funds, to fund comprehensive services and programs that support and strengthen this early development by:

- Building awareness in the community about the critical period of development that happens prenatal through age five and the needs of young children
- Collaborating with partners in the community to identify community strengths, needs and gaps in services
- Supporting families with programs that improve parenting skills and promote involvement in their child’s development and education
- Increasing the availability of and access to high quality early learning environments which include child care and preschool
- Advancing child health and nutrition through child care and preschool programs

[See Technical Assistance Cycle depiction](#)

Fiscal Year  
2017



Annual Report

# Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan

The ECI State Board's [strategic plan](#) for state fiscal years 2016-2018 identifies three goals for the ECI Initiative. These goals and activities are detailed in the pages that follow:

1. *Establish and promote a solid infrastructure to advance the early childhood system*
2. *Ensure access to high quality services for young children and their families*
3. *Build public will for supporting young children and their families*

## 1. Establish and Promote a Solid Infrastructure to Advance the Early Childhood System

Critical to the effectiveness of a state initiative is communications between all parts of the early childhood system. A priority has been to increase communication between the ECI State Board, ECI area boards and the ECI Stakeholders Alliance. ECI State Board members have attended ECI Stakeholders Alliance meetings, as well as statewide meetings with representatives of ECI area boards.

To strengthen perspectives of the ECI Initiative at the local level, the ECI State Board learned about the processes utilized by an ECI area board to address the needs and gaps in services for young children and their families in their community and heard from two Iowa communities about collaborations happening to address child care crisis needs. State board members also reached out to ECI area boards by attending local board meetings and meeting with staff to better understand the local processes and learn more about their needs.

The ECI State Board also heard presentations on state-level work, data, programs and policy changes. The presentations included the children's oral health program in Iowa, updates from ECI component groups, the United Ways of Iowa ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Report, and the changes for child care in Iowa as a result of the federal child care reauthorization.

To increase input at all levels of the early childhood system when developing policy changes, tools and funding formula decisions, the ECI State Board created committees. Committees included Core Services, State Annual Report, Designation Process for ECI Area Boards, and the Early Childhood Funding Formula. Committees were comprised of state board members and representation from the ECI Stakeholders Alliance and ECI area boards. To learn more about the work of the ECI State Board committees [click here](#).

Another method ECI uses to communicate with the early childhood system is through a weekly electronic publication called, "Monday Musings." The publication provides information, practical advice, training announcements, and success stories. Currently there are more than 400 subscribers that receive this weekly publication. [Click here](#) to sign up for Monday Musings.

Through effective communication strategies, the ECI State Board is able to provide oversight for the early childhood systems work.



# Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan

## 2. Ensure access to high quality services for young children and their families

A priority of the ECI State Board is to promote investments in programs, services and supports that are evidence-based, evidence-informed, research-based or promising practices to produce positive impacts for children and their families. Some programs and services funded at the state and local levels directly impact children and families, such as, preschool scholarships, transportation, oral health, family support, etc. Other investments increase the skills, knowledge and compensation of staff delivering the programs and services or the early learning environments children are in. These investments support coaching, mentoring, consultation, professional development, and wage supplements for staff and mini-grants for equipment, materials, or supplies to improve the health, safety and quality of the early learning environment.

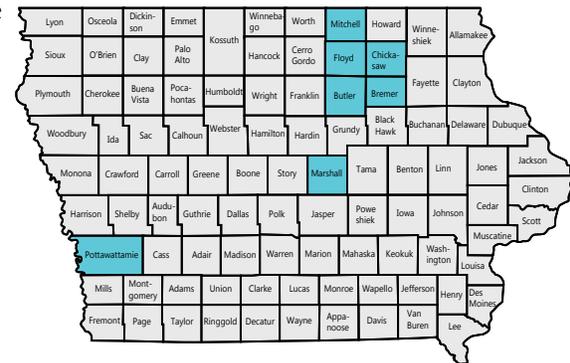
The programs, services and supports funded vary in each ECI area. Through a community needs assessment process of identifying strengths, needs and gaps, ECI area boards determine through data-informed decision making programs, services and supports needed in their area to increase positive outcomes for young children and their families. Boards determine how best to apply their funding through available data and other partners' contributions within that community. Following are stories from a few programs, services and supports funded through ECI.

### Supporting Iowa Families

Parents and families are the first and most important influence on a child's well-being and early development. Research has proven the long-term benefits of family

support and home visiting programs. Studies of these programs have highlighted improved maternal and child health, increased maternal employment and improved school readiness. Research has also produced new insight on the importance of adult-child interactions, managing behavior and preparing children to enter school healthy and ready to succeed. The skills, knowledge and relationships family support staff develop with the families they work with is critical for positive child and family outcomes.

- In *Marshall County*, a family support worker helps families to see what they often have trouble seeing on their own... the potential to be GREAT parents. The worker helps families realize that their past does NOT have to be their future and that she will be there with them in their journey. The worker gives gentle nudges when parents are ready to quit and is always there to celebrate their successes.
- A compassionate family support worker that serves families in *Floyd, Mitchell, Chickasaw, Bremer and Butler Counties* collaborates and connects families to community resources, encourages them to be the best they can be and continuously thinks outside the box to adapt to each family's individual needs.
- In *Pottawattamie County*, a registered nurse supervises the Nurse-Family Partnership program. The families served by the program sometimes live in significant poverty and often have complex challenges. The supervisor serves as a strong and persistent advocate in the community and can be relied on to have frank conversations to overcome obstacles.



## Early Care and Education

**WAGES® IOWA** (WAGES®) is a salary supplement program. As with **T.E.A.C.H. IOWA**, WAGES® is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association. WAGES® offers salary supplements (also called stipends) to the early care and education workforce based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to their program. To be eligible to receive a WAGES® stipend, the individual must work in a eligible early care and education program in a funded county, earn below the income cap (this varies by county, the standard cap is \$15/hour), have one of the educational levels listed in the supplement scale from a regionally accredited school, work at least six months in the same child care program and be employed at the same child care program when a final confirmation has been completed.

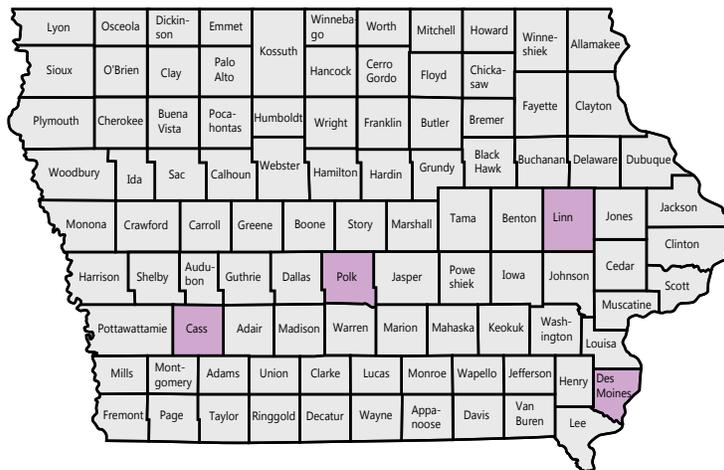
- In *Des Moines County*, a Registered Child Development Home provider began on the WAGES® program in July of 2015. She had already earned her associate degree and when she learned about the opportunity for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, began taking coursework toward her bachelor's degree. This year she took enough classes to increase her WAGES® award level from a Level 5 (\$1,100 per year) up to a Level 6 (\$1,400 per year) and will move up again once her degree is done. As part of the WAGES® eligibility, she also increased her Quality Rating System (QRS) level this year.

- In *Polk County*, a center-based preschool teacher began participating in the WAGES® program in January of 2015. As a single mother of two earning just \$9.15 per hour, she took coursework utilizing a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship and has advanced from a Level 3 on the WAGES® supplement scale (\$500 per year) all the way to a Level 5 (\$1,100 per year) by June of 2017. She is currently earning \$11.01 per hour and will move up on the WAGES® scale again when she graduates with her associate degree next year.

**Farm to Early Care and Education** is a program to increase access to healthy foods and physical activity for young children and their families. The program uses the farm to school model which incorporates gardening, educational activities, and local food purchasing.

- In *Cass County*, a child care home provider shared, *“The Farm to Early Care and Education program has benefitted my child care program in many ways. We planted our own child care garden and the kids seemed so excited to be able to care for it and harvest the produce, and then tasting new foods or at least foods grown by them: These are some quotes from a few kids, ‘I learned you have to take care of the plants, like watering them and trimming them, and then picking the tomatoes’ (5 year old girl). ‘I want to grow raspberries like Denise [a local farmer], they were my favorite’ (4 year old boy).”*

- A child care center in *Linn County* shared, *“We participated in the Farm to Early Care and Education program because we believe in the importance of introducing children to healthy foods and what better way but to take them through the whole process of planting, watering, weeding, picking and preparing to eat. Introducing new foods in this way takes a lot of fear out of the equation. Children buy in to tasting easier if they are the ones preparing the food.”*



# Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan

## Supporting Positive Mental Health

Reflective Supervision/Consultation is a model of practice that provides an opportunity for professionals working in the field of infant and early childhood mental health to improve the quality of mental health services offered to young children and their families. Through professional development and monthly consultation sessions, participants learn to regularly reflect on one's work with infants and families and develop capacity to understand, support and sustain effective relationships. For more information on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, [click here](#) to visit the Iowa Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IAIECMH).

- An early childhood mental health consultant in *Scott County* shared, *“Reflective Consultation has allowed me to take on a different approach with families – in that I am more patient with silence and I ask more open-ended questions that allow for the individual to find their own resolution.”*
- In *Polk County*, a licensed psychologist shared, *“Reflective Consultation has been very beneficial for me personally and for my work with infants, toddlers, young children, and their families. The consultation has given me a space to process through my reactions to children and their caregivers. It has encouraged me to be curious about my reactions and to use those to guide my clinical work. The consultation has also helped me to teach parents how to be reflective in their caregiving, allowing for healthy social and emotional development of their children. In addition, the information I have learned has improved my clinical skills for working with these young children.”*

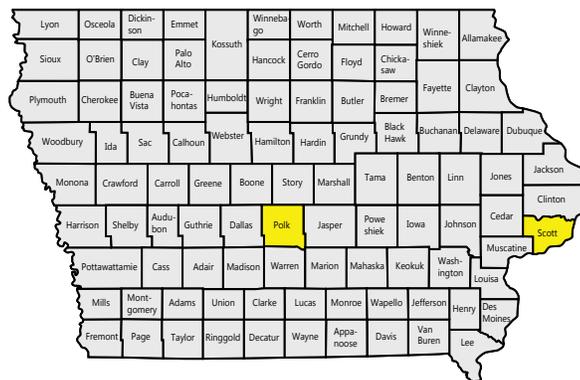
## 3. Build Public Will for Supporting Young Children and Their Families

Research and brain science over recent decades has made a compelling case for the significance of children's earliest years in terms of providing the foundation for their development and success over the rest of their lives. The environments children are in – families, child care and preschool – form the bedrock for lifelong health, academic achievement, emotional well-being and social functioning. A child's experiences and the relationships he/she has with caregivers in the early years of life impact brain development and future outcomes for the child, the community and our economy. These benefits include a better-educated population capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century; stable communities and greater social cohesion; a healthier population and a more productive workforce with reduced health care costs; and greater prosperity due to an innovative, competent and flexible workforce.

High-quality, affordable and accessible child care has a significant impact on the economic growth and competitiveness of Iowa companies. In order for Iowa to have a high quality workforce, we need to have a high quality education system that begins before a child goes to school. Businesses are key stakeholders in ensuring increased investments in child care and those environments where children begin their learning. When workers have access to high-quality,

stable, affordable child care, their employers are better off because it reduces absenteeism, productivity loss and increases employee retention.

The following two stories highlight private sector collaborations within the ECI early childhood system related to child care.



- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) of Northeast Iowa is working with businesses across their 19 county region on the child care crisis. Most recently, a conversation with a major factory in *Black Hawk County* developed into bringing more businesses together to assess the child care need. One HR Director reported that their company is losing over \$7,000 in turnover costs from staff leaving the job. A main reason employees identified for leaving was not being able to find adequate child care for their children. He asked CCR&R for resources and tools to help bring people together, along with startup costs to have their company think about opening a child care facility of their own. This conversation attracted attention in the community and now more businesses are coming to the table to discuss child care needs. While no final decision has been made, the end goal is that a child care facility will open to serve multiple businesses in the Cedar Valley area.

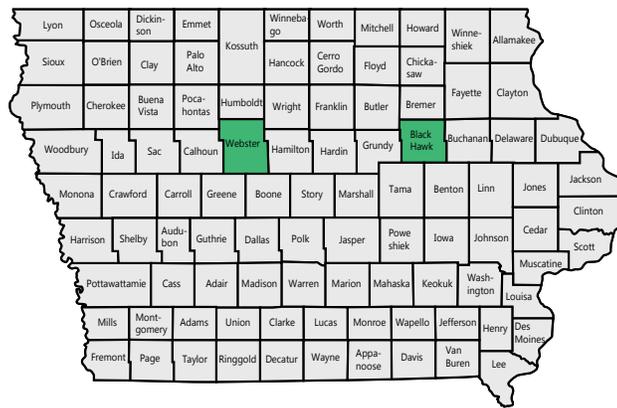
CCR&R continues to work alongside local chambers of commerce in the counties they serve to bring more businesses to the table and draw attention to the need for child care in Iowa.

- In *Webster County*, the Linking Families & Communities ECI board has been monitoring data related to the number of child care providers and child care spaces available in their three-county area. Annual data for the counties shows a downward trend in the number of child care providers and child care spaces available. For example, from 2016 to 2017, the area experienced a decrease of 24 child care providers, losing a total of 131 child care spaces.

Based on child care data and concerns raised by private sector partners, the community of Fort Dodge moved forward with a child care feasibility study.

The study was made possible through a collaboration between Linking Families and Communities, City of Fort Dodge, Boehringer-Ingelheim, C & S Products, Cargill, Fort Dodge Community Schools, Friendship Haven, Iowa Central Community College and UnityPoint – Trinity Regional Medical Center. The study concluded that the community of Fort Dodge has a shortage of 1,638 child care spaces. With that kind of deficit there is not just a need for a new child care center, there is a need for many more child care centers and child development homes. Using this information, Linking Families and Communities provided additional funding to promote the start-up of new child care centers and child development homes. That effort resulted in one new center with a capacity of 39 achieving licensure. One additional center and

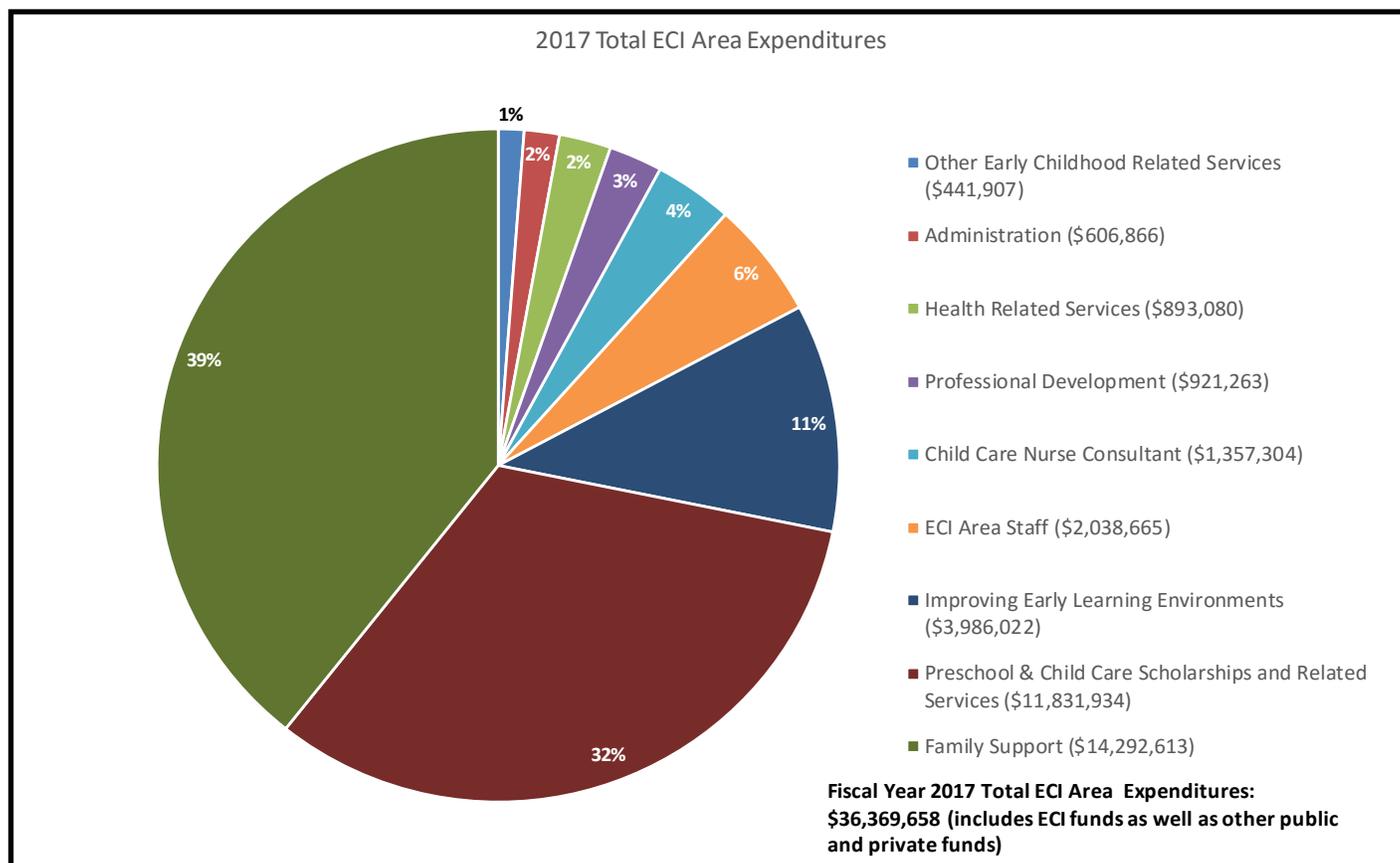
five additional homes were working on licensure/ registration at the end of the fiscal year. Linking Families and Communities also wrote and received a grant in November 2017 to support pre-design work for the expansion of an existing child care center and for a new center.



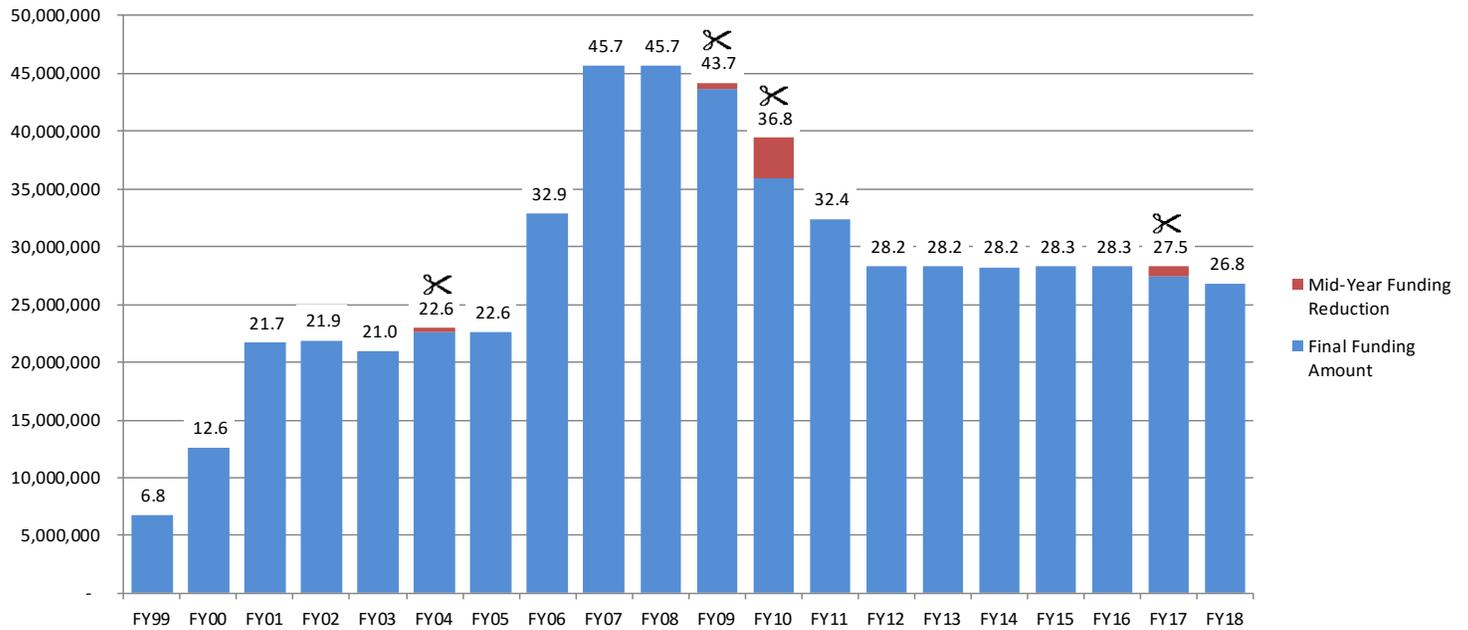
# Early Childhood Iowa Funding

In SFY'17, ECI area board expenditures totaled nearly \$27.8 million in state funds. ECI area boards also reported nearly \$8.6 million in additional public and private dollars expended to support programs, services and staff. State-level ECI Office expended \$1,214,839. Of this amount, \$25,367 was expended for office expenditures, \$11,745 in travel expenses and \$352,697 for staff salary and benefits. The staff salary and benefits were for two full time and a part time administrative staff person in the ECI State Office. The staff salary and benefits also included \$50,000 from the Early Childhood appropriation to support a part time staff person to the ECI State Technical Assistance (TA) Team from the Department of Human Services (DHS). In addition to the one TA Team member from DHS, the Iowa Department of Public Health contributes a quarter time staff person and the Department of Education contributes a part time staff person.

The remaining amount of funds expended was for state-level professional development. ECI receives funding at the state-level to support and move forward efforts to strengthen the early childhood's professional development system. The ECI State Office receives input from the ECI Professional Development Component Group to determine investments in the professional development system. Funds are primarily targeted for projects that would not otherwise happen on their own. In FY '17, the allocated funding was \$825,030. Funded projects included the Iowa Family Support Credential; Infant and Toddler Mental Health; Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports; T.E.A.C.H. IOWA Scholarships and Child Development Associate (CDA) Support; WAGES® IOWA Project; Shaken Baby Prevention; as well as other projects designed to strengthen the quality of services delivered to young children and their families.



# Early Childhood Iowa Funding History



SFY'99 - 29 counties funded  
 SFY'00 - 98 counties funded  
 SFY'01 - 99 counties funded  
 SFY'04 - 2.5% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding; .25% funding restored before the end of the fiscal year (adjusted decrease in funding of \$294,305.50)  
 SFY'09 - 1.5% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$524,135.60)  
 SFY'10 - \$500,000 mid-year reduction in Early Childhood funding; 10% mid-year reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$3,015,369)  
 SFY'11 - At the close of the 2010 legislative session, SF2366 signed into law making appropriations to backfill SFY'10 School Ready Preschool funding  
 SFY'15 - Early Childhood funds - DHS reduced the amount withheld from the appropriation for the TA team member  
 SFY'17 - 3.75% mid-year across the board reduction in School Ready funding (decrease in funding of \$824,994)



# Preparing for Iowa's Future Starts at Birth

By 2025, 68% of all Iowa jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school.<sup>i</sup> To meet this challenge, we have to start early. After years of research into how to most effectively and efficiently develop human capital, Nobel Laureate Professor James J. Heckman concluded, *“The foundation for school, career and life success is largely determined through the development of cognitive and character skills beginning in children’s earliest years.”*

Professor Heckman’s research shows that the earlier the investment, the greater the return. His findings identify that investments in high quality, comprehensive birth-to-five programs produce significant outcomes for both the child and the child’s mother.<sup>ii</sup> Investments in high-quality early learning programs mean significant public savings due to a strong return on investment: 13% ROI. Professor Heckman’s findings are rooted in how brains develop. To learn more about Professor Heckman’s research [click here](#).

“For brain development, 3 is like pushing middle age.”

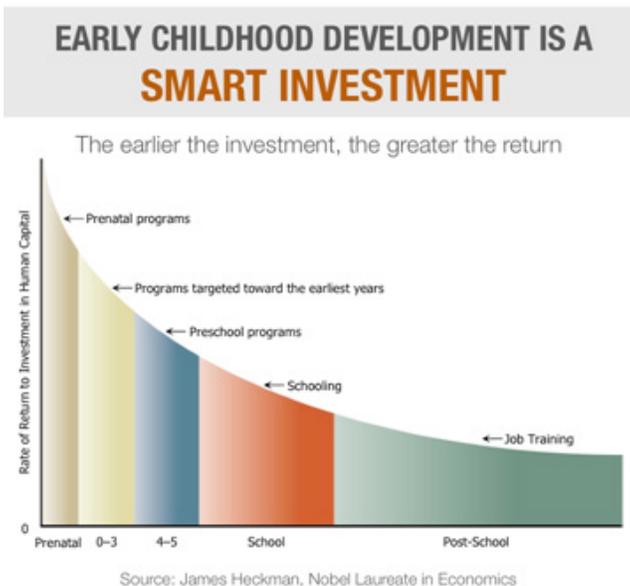
*Dr. Jack Shonkoff,  
Center on the Developing  
Child, Harvard University*

Brain scientists have discovered that during children’s earliest years, their experiences are built into their bodies — shaping the brain’s architecture, affecting how biological systems develop and impacting a child’s cognitive, social and emotional skills for the rest of his or her life. In other words, brains are built, not born.

The basic architecture of the brain begins with simpler neural connections and skills being formed first, followed by more complex circuits and skills. In the first few years of life, more than one million new neural connections form every second. As Dr. Jack Shonkoff, pediatrician and leading expert on brain development, describes this rapid period of brain development in early childhood, *“For brain development, 3 is like pushing middle age.”* After this period of rapid proliferation, connections are reduced through a process called pruning, which allows brain circuits to become more efficient. To learn more about early brain development [click here](#).

The early years are so defining that the relationships young children have with caregivers and the quality of the early learning environments children are in can predict future academic achievement and career success. Every environment – whether home, preschool, or child care – is a learning environment. When we invest in creating opportunities for optimal child development, children are more likely to read at grade-level by the end of third grade, graduate from high school, stay healthier throughout their lives, get higher paying jobs and contribute more toward the costs of important public services.<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Georgetown University: Center on Education and the Workforce (2015). Iowa: Education and Workforce Trends Through 2025.  
<sup>ii</sup> Garcia, J. L., Heckman, J. J., Leaf, D. E., & Prados, M. J. (2016). The Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program.  
<sup>iii</sup> ZERO TO THREE (2015). ZERO TO THREE Policy Pocket Card.





*By investing in our youngest children, we create a stronger Iowa through individual health, wellness & economic well-being; thriving communities; and global competitiveness.*

# Advancing Iowa's Early Childhood System

ECI's structure includes a network of ECI area boards that provide expertise, guidance and infrastructure to ensure that Iowa's children receive the care and nurturing they need to thrive. As area boards work to enhance support for families, early childhood professionals and the communities they serve, the ECI State Board and the ECI Stakeholders Alliance work at the state-level to assist state departments and lawmakers in exploring opportunities to strengthen coordination of the early childhood system.

Three larger scale initiatives within ECI are helping to move Iowa's early childhood system forward. The initiatives are Core Services, Integrated Data System and Public Private Partnerships.

## *Core Services*

Through an extensive process involving each segment of the early childhood system, the ECI State Board is working to identify a core set of services young children need to be healthy and successful. So, no matter what county a young child lives in Iowa, he/she should have the essential supports needed to produce lifelong health, social outcomes and economic success. By identifying a core set of services for young children and their families, ECI is able to promote a consistent methodology about the value of a holistic approach for children and their families prior to a child beginning school.

The ECI State Board established a Core Services Leadership Committee which includes citizen members and two state department directors. Through a visionary process, the Leadership Committee and ECI state staff identified what was meant by 'core services' and strategies to assess current service levels in communities by engaging ECI area boards. To help with the work and serve in an advisory role, the Leadership Committee established a subcommittee. The subcommittee includes members

of the ECI Stakeholders Alliance with representation from ECI area boards and state departments. Through this framework approach, a deliberate alignment of services is occurring. At a community level, the subcommittee conducted an informal survey to determine ECI area director's perspectives of each identified core service. This process allows for an alignment of goals between state and local levels. As ECI prepares for a statewide needs assessment, the primary focus is on the identified core set of services. As ECI strengthens the early childhood system, we will see stronger outcomes for children and families and with it legitimacy to the respected parts of the system. Collaboration is key to our success in Iowa to support a core set of services and work to improve outcomes for young children and their families.

## *Integrated Data System*

Lawmakers and the public frequently demand that public service systems do more, do better and cost less. For these reasons, more attention is being given to the value of integrated data systems (IDS). IDS use administrative data that is collected by government agencies in the normal course of delivering social services and programs. The purpose of an IDS is to support cycles of inquiry to inform decision making about important social problems.

While ECI efforts have focused on enhancing the effectiveness of early childhood services through ECI area boards, ECI reviewed the requirements for the ECI Initiative in Iowa Code chapter 256I and the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1429-642b) to advance the development of an early childhood IDS. An IDS would facilitate statewide needs assessments to identify gaps in current service system networks, enhance effective programming efforts at the provider level, broaden our ability to measure successful child outcomes in diverse and meaningful ways to promote data-informed decisions about funding priorities.

The work began with a public-private workgroup of the ECI Results Accountability Component Group. The workgroup collaborated with Iowa State University to learn about the development and implementation of IDS in other states and municipalities. In early 2016, the ECI State Board approved the establishment of an IDS Taskforce to initiate stakeholder engagement and planning activities. In early 2017, state department directors represented on the ECI State Board approved the IDS Taskforce's request to join the Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP) training and technical assistance program that would provide support in the development of an IDS. Iowa applied for and was selected as one of 10 sites across the country to join the AISP Training and Technical Assistance Program.

The AISP Training and Technical Assistance Program is an 18-month planning process to build an infrastructure plan for an Iowa IDS. The program focuses training and technical assistance in key components of IDS infrastructure including governance, legal and ethical agreements, data management and analytics, and sustainability. In consultation with leadership across state departments, the IDS Taskforce is developing a plan, including the identification of data sources, to build the core components of an IDS infrastructure. The program through AISP ends in December 2018.

### *Public Private Partnerships*

ECI State Board members have had a growing interest in engaging the private sector, specifically the business community, in the early childhood system. A strong early childhood system has a two-generational impact. First, parents are supported as their children's first teacher and are reliable and productive workers when their children are in high quality early learning environments. Second, children have the chance to develop well and begin kindergarten ready to thrive in school, work and life.

The ECI State Board established a Public Private Partnership Committee to identify and implement strategies to engage the private sector to promote efforts that leverage expertise and solutions of the critical period of early childhood development. The committee includes ECI State Board members, representation from ECI area boards, private organizations in the early childhood system and the Iowa Women's Foundation.

After initial discussions, the committee decided to focus on building awareness among businesses and the general public about the critical role quality child care plays in recruiting and retaining employees that are reliable and productive. The committee developed an action plan for the work the committee wants to accomplish in the next fiscal year.





*“The first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out.”*

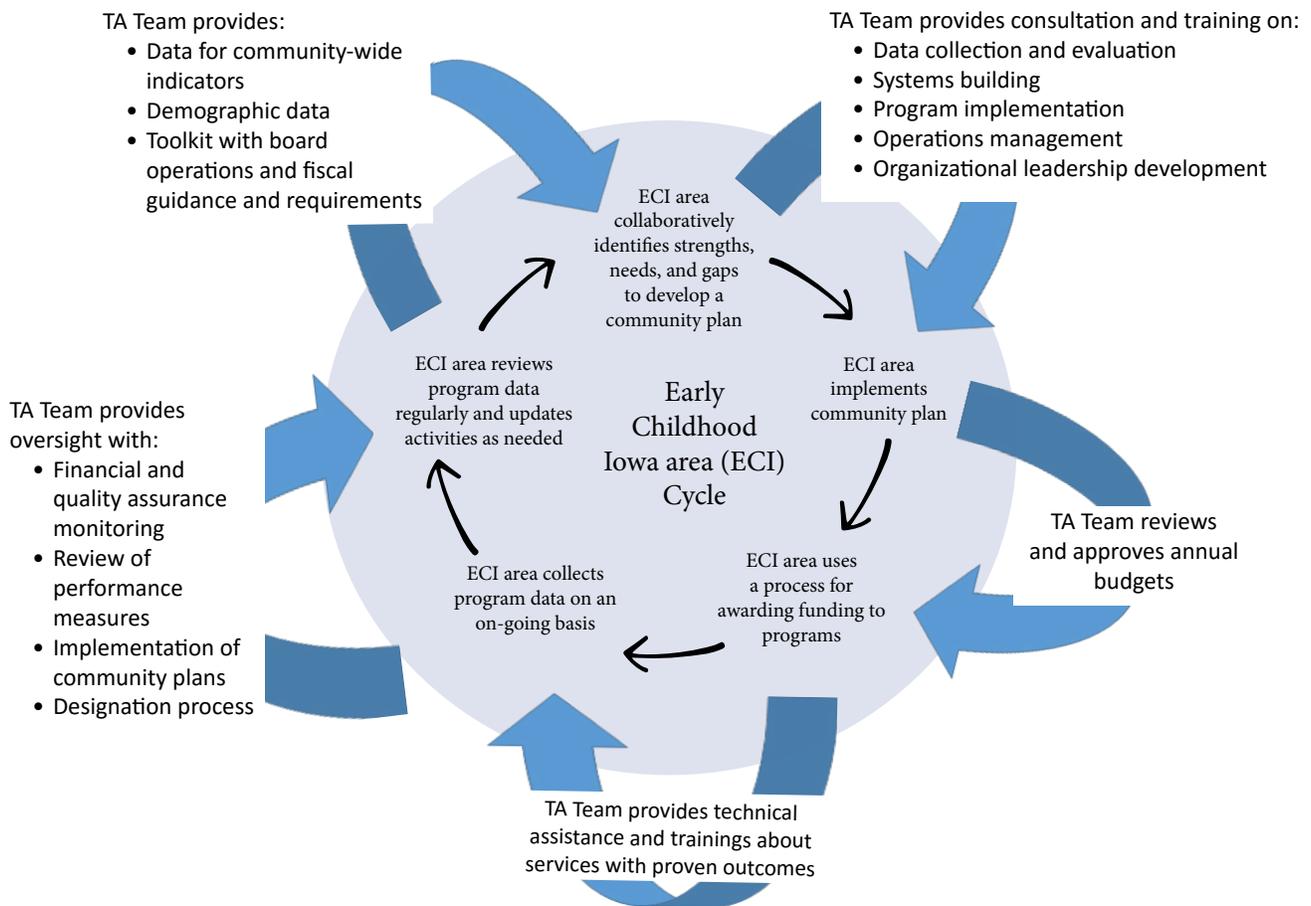
-Bill Gates Sr., Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

# Early Childhood Iowa Cycle of Technical Assistance and Oversight

The chart below outlines the process for ECI area boards in using data to inform their community planning processes and how the ECI State Technical Assistance (TA) Team supports the local process.

planning and delivery mechanism for Iowa's early childhood system. ECI not only funds programs and services to support families and children, but also supports shared learning and innovation, allows for flexibility to address problems and assures opportunity for young children.

With statewide governance and local data-informed decision making, ECI acts as an effective and efficient



Fiscal Year  
2017



Annual Report

# Evaluating Results through Data

ECI uses the Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) framework for evaluating the results of the initiative. In Iowa law, the ECI Initiative has five desired results for improving the quality of life in Iowa for young children and their families. These ‘result areas’ are:

- Healthy children
- Children ready to succeed in school
- Safe and supportive communities
- Secure and nurturing families
- Secure and nurturing early learning environments

ECI uses measures, called community-wide indicators, to determine progress made toward achieving the result areas. Community-wide indicators are population measurements and are usually collected by public agencies. Some indicators tracked by ECI include: babies born with a low birth weight; child abuse rate for children five years old and younger; births to mothers under age 20; domestic violence rate; juvenile crime rate; percent of children under age six in poverty; and availability of child care.

To measure the outcomes of programs and services, the ECI State Board established state-required performance measures for programs and services ECI area boards’ fund. Performance measures focus on whether those served are better off as a result of the program or service received. These performance measures also look at the quality and efficiency of the programs and services. Results-Based Accountability™ asks three simple questions to get at the most important performance measures.

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

Following are two examples of data collected for ECI Result Areas. The data includes a community-wide indicator and performance measures for services funded by ECI area boards.

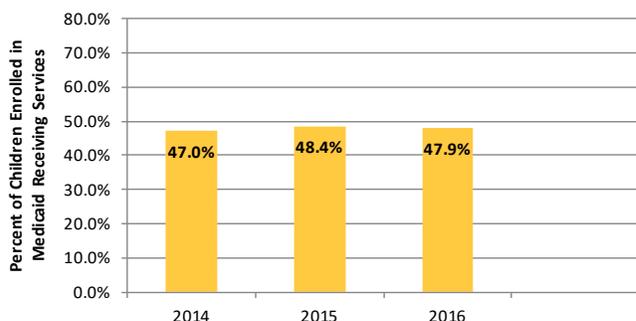
Refer to the 2017 ECI State Indicators and Performance Measures supplement for information and data on all adopted community-wide indicators, as well as, performance measures of programs and services funded by ECI area boards.



# Evaluating Results through Data

## Result Area: Healthy Children

### Dental Services



Medicaid-enrolled children ages 0-5 who receive dental services

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health via CMS 416 Data

### Dental Services

Dental service programs provide oral health education, screenings, referrals for dental treatment, fluoride varnish applications, and support and supplies for conducting on-site tooth brushing dental disease prevention programs.



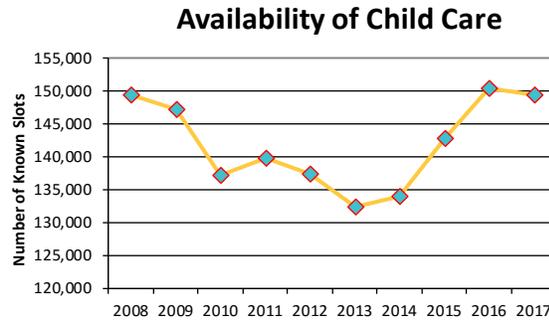
	SFY'15	SFY'16	SFY'17
Number of children receiving dental services.	16,295 children served by the program at an average cost of \$36.13 per child	15,191 children served by the program at an average cost of \$40.76 per child	18,237 children served by the program at an average cost of \$33.52 per child
Number of children screened for cavities and decay.	15,675 children (or 96%) screened of which 1,586 children were referred for additional services	14,175 children (or 93%) screened of which 2,144 children were referred for additional services	17,364 children (or 97%) screened of which 1,730 children were referred for additional services
Number of children referred to a dentist.	813 children referred to a dentist	1,081 children referred to a dentist	860 children referred to a dentist
Number of children that were cavity free.	13,547 children (or 86%) were cavity free	12,739 children (or 90%) were cavity free	15,417 children (or 87%) were cavity free
Number of ECI area boards funding this service.	21 ECI area boards expended \$588,678	22 ECI area boards expended \$619,129	22 ECI area boards expended \$611,386

# Evaluating Results through Data

## Result Area: Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments

Number of licensed and registered child care slots

Source: Iowa Department of Human Services



### WAGES® IOWA Program

WAGES® IOWA (WAGES®) is a salary supplement program. As with T.E.A.C.H. IOWA, WAGES® is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association. WAGES® offers salary supplements (also called stipends) to the early care and education workforce, based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to their program. To be eligible to receive a WAGES® stipend, the individual must work in an eligible early care and education program in a funded county, earn below the income cap (this varies by county, the standard cap is \$15/hour), have one of the educational levels listed in the supplement scale from a regionally accredited school, work at least six months in the same child care program and be employed at the same child care program when a final confirmation has been completed.

	SFY'15	SFY'16	SFY'17
Number of recipients that received a wage stipend.	55 recipients in 25 early care programs	146 recipients in 61 early care programs	158 recipients in 83 early care programs
Average six month stipend paid to a recipient.	\$1,280 average stipend paid	\$1,368 average stipend paid	\$1,827 average stipend paid
Number of recipients at temporary award levels that earned additional college credits.	2 recipients (or 6%) earned additional college credits	17 recipients (or 24%) earned additional college credits	20 recipients (or 27%) earned additional college credits
Number of recipients that retained employment at the same early care program.	51 recipients (or 93%) remained employed	135 recipients (or 92%) remained employed	131 recipients (or 83%) remained employed
Number of early care programs that are a QRS Level 3 or higher.	68% of programs were a QRS Level 3 or higher	84% of programs were a QRS Level 3 or higher	86% of programs were a QRS Level 3 or higher
Number of ECI area boards funding this program.	4 ECI area boards expended \$111,305	5 ECI area boards expended \$262,988	8 ECI area boards expended \$288,738



*"The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st century is to invest in early childhood education, to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed along side their more advantaged peers."*

James J. Heckman, Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago

