



Priorities for improving Iowa's child-care system

A five-year plan for early care and education

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Why child care matters

- Enables parents to be **productive** workers
- Supports **small businesses**
- Supports **healthy development** in children
 - Early childhood lays a foundation for **future well-being**
 - Good child care fosters **strong foundations**



What is the public role in child care?

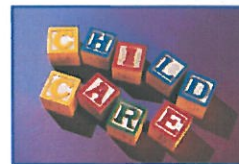
- Ensure a level of **safety and quality**
- Make child care **affordable** and **available** so families can meet work expectations
- Improve children's **opportunities for success** in school and beyond



Currently in Iowa

The system has many strengths, but also areas ripe for improvement:

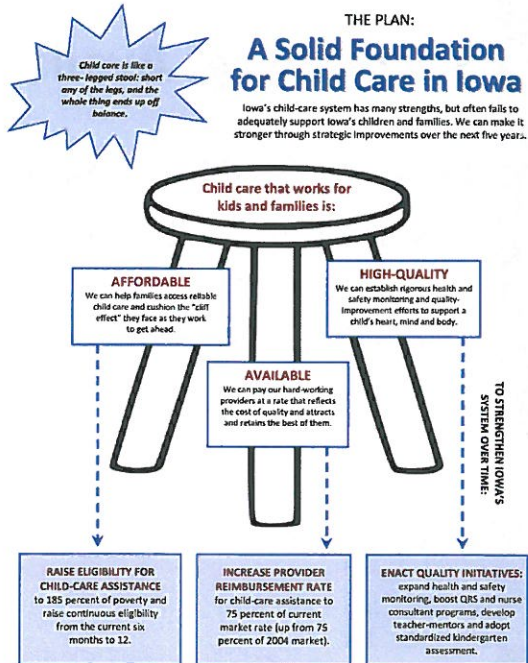
- Quality
- Child care assistance eligibility
- Reimbursement rates
- Early Childhood Iowa



How can we make the system better?

A five-year plan to improve:

- Affordability
- Availability
- Quality

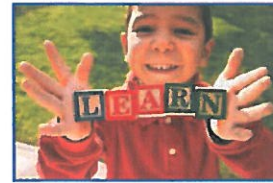


First Leg: Affordable

Raise eligibility for child-care assistance

- Move eligibility level to 185% of FPL
 - from current 145%
- Raise continuous eligibility to 12 months
 - from current six months

We can help families access reliable child care and cushion the “cliff effect” they face as they work to get ahead.



Second Leg: Available

Increase provider reimbursement rate

- Move rate to 75th percentile of **current** market rate
 - up from 75th percentile of **2004** market rate + 2%

We can pay our hard-working providers at a rate that reflects the cost of quality and attracts and retains the best of them.



Third Leg: High-quality

Enact quality initiatives

- Stronger health and safety monitoring
- Boost QRS
- More child care nurse consultants
- Other Early Learning Challenge Grant provisions

We can establish rigorous health and safety monitoring and quality-improvement efforts to support a child's heart, mind and body.



Supporting improvements

- Affordability
 - Public education on child care assistance
 - Tiered reimbursement based on quality
- Availability
 - Timely notice of decision
 - Improve CC workforce pay, i.e. WAGES and TEACH



Supporting improvements

- Quality

- Health and safety

- Require pre-service H&S training
 - Inspect all CD homes annually
 - Better track and report H&S outcomes
 - Expand fingerprint checks; make them portable

- Quality improvement

- Reinstate full QRS incentives for maintaining current level
 - Better support “family, friend and neighbor” caregivers
 - Offer more and better provider training



- Wrap-around care

State action is Iowa tradition

- Under Gov. Bob Ray

- Start of child care subsidy program and licensing, registration and monitoring programs

- Under Gov. Terry Branstad

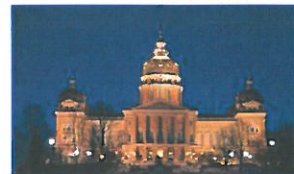
- Start of Shared Visions, QRS and Community Empowerment (first admin.), submission of ELC grant application (second admin.)

- Under Gov. Tom Vilsack

- Expanded Community Empowerment, boosts to eligibility and reimbursement rates

- Under Gov. Chet Culver

- Four-year-old preschool, Community Empowerment restructured into Early Childhood Iowa



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