



Family, Friend and Neighbor Care A Report of Findings and Recommendations

Submitted by the Iowa Empowerment Board

January 2009

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Legislation passed in May 2008.

From HF 2679:

The Iowa empowerment board shall conduct a study of the role that community empowerment can play in strengthening family, friend, and neighbor care to help achieve empowerment goals. In conducting the study, the board may do any or all of the following:

- (1) Review national models and identify best practices in providing information, networking, and learning opportunities and activities for family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.
- (2) Examine and highlight current efforts of local empowerment boards to strengthen family, friend, and neighbor caregiving.
- (3) Convene a working group, including representatives from child care resource and referral centers, libraries, community centers, and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers, to provide advice to the board on family, friend, and neighbor care.
- (4) Articulate the ways that community empowerment boards can use school ready children grants account funds to support family, friend, and neighbor care.
- (5) Host a state summit on family, friend, and neighbor care.
- (6) Examine potential public and private partnerships to provide information, networking, and learning opportunities for family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

The Iowa empowerment board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the governor and general assembly by January 15, 2009. For purposes of this paragraph, "family, friend, and neighbor care" means child care, usually provided without cost and on a voluntary basis, by a family member, a friend, or a neighbor whose reason for providing that care is a strong existing personal relationship with the parent and the parent's child or children. Particular attention shall be given to grandparents providing such care, including grandparents who may be the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

The Iowa Empowerment Board, at their July 2008 meeting received a presentation from Sheila Hansen and Melissa Nelson of the Child and Family Policy Center of Iowa. Ms. Hansen and Ms. Nelson shared an overview of some state studies as well as national work conducted in this area. In response to the legislation and the presentation, the Iowa Empowerment Board created a committee of the Board to respond to the legislated requests.

Family, Friend and Neighbor Care Committee Membership:

Rae Anderson, National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC), a service of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families

Charles Bruner, Child and Family Policy Center

Becky Burgart, Iowa Empowerment Board

Dawn Collins, Department of Human Services, Child Care and Community Services

Peg DeLoe, Child Care Resource and Referral

Sheila Hansen, Child and Family Policy Center – Every Child Counts

Darshini Jayawardena, Iowa Empowerment Board

Katie McKenzie, United Way of Central Iowa

Melissa Nelson, Child and Family Policy Center

Karon Perlowski, Child and Family Policy Center

Doug Peters, Iowa Empowerment Board

Judy Proska, West Des Moines Public Library

Tiffany Smith, Child and Family Policy Center – Every Child Counts

Kate Walton, Governor's Office

Jeannie Warning, ISU Ext - Extension to Families

Robin White, AFSCME

Staff to this Committee:

Tami Foley, Department of Human Services,

Kristi Judkins, Iowa Workforce Development,

Debra Scrowther, Iowa Department of Management, and

Shanell Wagler, Iowa Department of Management

The Family, Friend and Neighbor Care Committee (FFN Committee and/or the Committee) began meeting in August 2008. The Committee conducted all necessary activities to respond to the legislation. Through this process, which included a review of research and studies and conducting a summit, the committee became engaged in the process and is supportive of the information reflected in this report.

For more information about Family, Friend and Neighbor Care (FFN) conducted through the Iowa Empowerment Board, go to:

http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/family_care.asp

Highlights of National Studies/Reports

Recently a handful of states have increased or continued their focus on Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Care in terms of policy, innovative programs, and resources to support this focus. Examples of this include:

- The Minnesota Legislature, in 2007, appropriating \$750,000 for a new FFN care competitive grant program to expand services and supports for FFN caregivers throughout the state. With this investment, Minnesota became the first state to provide specific state funding to strengthen FFN care through community organization and partnerships. These partnerships are to include community-based organizations, Indian tribes, libraries, non-profits, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, public early childhood and family education programs and Head Start. Activities to be supported include:
 - Parent education and caregiver support and training;
 - Intentional linkages to programs for nutrition, child and family health and mental health, safety, economic needs, developmental needs of children, early literacy and school readiness; and
 - Resources that provide materials for promoting school readiness and literacy support for FFN caregivers.
- The ongoing work of Hawaii's Play+Learn groups, developed by the state's Good Beginnings Initiative. These community-based groups provide caregivers and parents with a facilitated opportunity to come together and learn about children's language, cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development while at the same time providing peer support and learning for the caregivers. Originally created as traveling preschools in the early 1990s these groups have been replicated across the state by Native Hawaiian and parent support groups, Hawaii's Department of Education and others.
- Washington State's work to expand their Seattle/King County Play & Learn groups. The FFN Caregiving project, in partnership with the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency, libraries, family resource centers, local government, Head Start, community colleges, faith communities and others coordinate these local groups.

Through a partnership with the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network a statewide FFN learning community was formed in 2007. This learning community has shared the lessons and strategies of the Seattle-based Play & Learn groups in seven new communities and is planning to spread to underserved communities in five additional counties, eventually providing services statewide. This will include making FFN care supports part of all local Child Care Resource and Referral's (CCR&

R's) core services. Washington has also worked to educate the private sector on the importance of quality FFN care for young children and has secured substantial private investments and produced a five-year business plan to fund these expanded efforts.

- Pennsylvania's comprehensive FFN care policy to support parent choice and FFN caregivers. The BUILD Taskforce on Quality in Regulation Exempt Care Settings was created to formulate a policy for the Pennsylvania Office of Development and Early Learning. Their recommendations, released in May of 2008, included:
 - The development of easy to use guides around the state early learning standards and strategies to make them accessible to FFN care providers statewide;
 - The development of a communication campaign to identify FFN caregivers and familiarize them with the available services and resources;
 - The expansion of Pennsylvania's professional development system to include information for and access to FFN caregivers;
 - An assessment around the needs specific to FFN caregivers in Pennsylvania;
 - The development of local professional and leadership networks for FFN caregivers; and
 - Expanding the potential funders for this work.

The FFN Committee considered these best practices and policies from other state efforts in identifying next steps and policy recommendations specific to Iowa.

Background of current situation regarding FFN Care in Iowa

One element the Iowa Empowerment Board was directed by the General Assembly to include in the study was the identification of existing activities to support family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care that are being implemented and/or planned by Local Community Empowerment Area (CEA) board.

The FFN Committee used an on-line survey to gather information from CEA boards regarding community supports and services to FFN. In order to design the online survey, the FFN Committee examined existing national and state research as well as specific state examples of strategies to support FFN. The following strategies, typical of those implemented by multiple state and local governments across the county, have proven successful in supporting FFN care.

- ***Play + Learn Groups*** – programs for FFN caregivers to regularly bring their children, where activities exist for both children and caregivers;

- **Family Place Libraries** – regular programs or activities through libraries that FFN caregivers can come to and participate in with the children in their care;
- **FFN Peer Networks and Meetings** – support groups, such as grandparents raising grandchildren, that have resources for meeting, networking, and getting information and advice about child care and child development;
- **Faith-Based and Community FFN Programs** – regular meetings of FFN caregivers sponsored through faith-based or other community organizations;
- **FFN Resource Materials** – specific resource materials providing information geared to FFN caregivers such as tips for grandparents raising their grandchildren;
- **Respite Services** – drop-in centers to provide respite care for FFN providers, or other structured ways that FFN caregivers can access respite care; and
- **CCR&R Programs for FFN Care** – information and training programs or activities designed specifically for FFN caregivers (including CPR, First Aid, Rescue Breathing, Child Development 101, etc.) and not tied to registration/continuing education

With over 75% of Community Empowerment Areas responding, the online survey was an effective tool and helped us create a preliminary picture of the current Iowa landscape on this topic. The following information was reported by the CEA boards regarding current levels of activity in their community in providing different services for family, friend, and neighbor care:

FFN Online Survey Results from CEAs

Activity	Currently Providing	Very or Somewhat Interested in Learning More About
Play & Learn Groups	9.6%	85.5 %
Family Place Libraries	5.3%	82.4%
FFN Peer & Network Meetings	6.8%	84.1%
FFN Faith-based & Community FFN Programs	2.7%	81.2%
FFN Resource Materials	10.7%	88.4%
Respite Services for FFN	6.8%	76.2%
CCR&R Programs for FFN	6.8%	88.3%

The survey information provided the following conclusions:

- Even without explicit direction, Community Empowerment boards have supported some activities related to FFN Care, and there are some program examples to build upon within Iowa.
- Community Empowerment boards are interested in learning more about what can be done to support FFN Care.

Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Network Support for Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Care Summary

The Iowa CCR&R Network is committed to serving all child care providers, including those who provide FFN care. The support that is provided to FFN providers is limited at best and lacks consistency across the state for several reasons:

- Lack of access to or knowledge of unregulated child care providers
- Lack of resources (funding for staff time, supplies, etc.) to meet specific needs of FFN providers
- FFN providers are difficult to identify because they do not see themselves as child care providers or think of their needs in terms of training and education programs that are the traditional way that CCR&Rs provide support to the child care community.

Most of the current CCR&R work is designed to meet the needs of the registered or licensed child care community. While some CCR&R agencies conduct outreach efforts to unregulated providers, primarily those receiving child care subsidies, these providers do not necessarily constitute FFN providers as defined in Iowa legislation.

That being said, there are numerous examples where CCR&R Networks are currently engaged in activities to include and support FFN providers. The following list includes a brief description of these activities:

- Scott County Empowerment has funded a CCR&R position dedicated to serving unregulated providers. The target population is unregulated providers receiving Child Care Assistance (CCA), not specifically FFN providers. The goal is to support non-registered providers and also to assist those non-registered providers interested in pursuing registration. Because of this project, support is offered to FFN providers who receive CCA. Services include
 - Home visits with literacy kits
 - Free CPR/First Aid
 - Monthly newsletter
- FFN care providers that are known to the CCR&R, are encouraged to use the existing CCR&R services throughout Iowa, although these services are not adapted in any way to meet their needs:
 - With permission, placed on the referral database

- Receive information about available training and able to access the training
- Receive information from CCR&R about advantages to becoming registered and support offered by CCR&R to assist with the process
- With permission, added to mailing lists to receive regular communications from CCR&R including newsletters
- CCR&R in Marion County received a small amount of funding this year to develop a plan to recruit FFN providers. They have developed an advisory group to help develop this program and they are looking at developing play groups and integrating a training component. They will be implementing the project later in the year.
- CCR&R of Central Iowa supports the United Way of Central Iowa FFN initiative by:
 - Providing technical assistance as requested
 - Utilizing database for mailings as requested
 - Promoting the work of United Way in conducting Play+Learn groups for parents and FFN providers.

The online Survey of Community Empowerment Boards showed particular interest in any materials and resources that could be provided to FFN providers to help them in their work. These could include “fact sheets” or “toolkits” or “activity guides,” including information specifically geared to grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. While CCR&R Networks could be sources for disseminating such information, there currently is not a set of materials specifically designed for FFN providers for general use across the state by CCR&R Networks, Cooperative Extension offices, or libraries.

Highlights from the Summit

In legislation passed in May 2008, the Iowa Empowerment Board was given the charge to conduct a study of the role that Community Empowerment boards can play in strengthening family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care to help achieve Community Empowerment goals. One of the strategies that was set forth in the legislation was to host a state summit.

On November 10, 2008, over 100 individuals from across the state and across disciplines came together to participate in the conversation around research, policy & practice. Becky Burgart, Iowa Empowerment Board member, opened the day and introduced the first speaker, Dr. Charles Bruner, from the Child and Family Policy Center.

Dr. Bruner framed the day in the context of the following definition of FFN care, “care provided to a child because of the caregiver’s close, personal relationship with the family and child generally without payment.” He then shared national, as

well as Iowa specific data, around this issue. Here is a link to various resources referenced by Dr. Bruner. http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/family_care.asp

Participants were also privileged to hear from national experts. Nina Sazer O'Donnell, United Way of America, shared national statistics and talked about why parents choose this type of care and why individuals provide this type of care. Ms. Sazer's presentation included comments regarding increasing attention and activity across the country on FFN care as an important family support, and as part of the child care continuum, as well as lessons learned, and successful strategies to promote FFN care and support providers.

Sessy Nyman, from Illinois Action for Children, a Child Care, Resource and Referral Agency, outlined the specific steps they have taken at the service delivery and policy level to strengthen the role of FFN care as a viable option for parents and children. According to Ms. Nyman, FFN is highly valued and well supported by the state and local governments throughout Illinois. She challenged participants to learn from Illinois' model and be a leader in this "both/and" approach to establishing a high quality early childhood system of centers and family child care home providers, and providing resources and supports on a voluntary basis to enhance FFN care. She shared that while Iowa has particular opportunities through Community Empowerment, it will require some explicit policies to maximize this potential.

Iowa community examples were also shared, showcasing successful strategies in reaching this type of caregiver and therefore also supporting families in Iowa with young children. One of those examples was the Early Head Start Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot Project, initiated in 2004 by the Office of Head Start (formerly the Head Start Bureau) within the Administration for Children and Families. The Early Head Start (EHS), Community Action Agency of Siouxland presented. They are one of the more than 20 EHS programs, across all 10 regions of the country, who participated in the pilot project. The overall purpose of the pilot was to support the quality of care family, friend and neighbor providers offer infants and toddlers enrolled in EHS. The evaluation of the pilot focused on assessing quality in these settings, identifying program models and promising practices, and documenting strategies and challenges.

Another local example highlighted at the Summit was a collaborative effort through Polk County Empowerment, United Way of Central Iowa, Des Moines Making Connections, and Polk County Visiting Nurse Services. Practical tools and resources that were developed by this collaboration and tested locally were demonstrated. These tools are utilized with FFN care providers who are registered as well as those who provide care for relatives, neighbors and friends of parents with young children. They include a School Readiness Calendar that offers support to parents and FFN providers in providing environments that can help children prepare for kindergarten and the establishment of Play+Learn groups in the community to offer opportunities for FFN providers to bring the children in their care to regular group activities.

The day ended with a facilitated discussion by Rae Anderson of the National Child Care and Information and Technical Assistance Center, a service of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. Participants in the summit answered the question, “Where do we go from here?” The group was challenged to think of this issue as not supporting either FFN care or professional, regulated child care, but instead to find ways to recognize and support both types of care. Noting that approximately 35% of America’s children are in FFN care, participants agreed that strategies to support FFN care should be part of every community’s efforts to prepare young children for success in school and life.

Participants then reacted to comments from their peers, shared additional thoughts about what they had heard and learned while attending the Summit and generated ideas about potential next steps for promoting and supporting FFN care. Comments included:

- Exploration of the connection between FFN care and the Quality Rating System in other states such as Illinois.
- Incorporation of FFN care in Iowa’s early care, health & education system development conversations.
- Exploration of development of materials for FFN providers that could be used across the state by CCR&R Networks, Cooperative extension offices, public libraries, and United Ways.
- Determination of the need for state level conversations around consistency and definition, inking the potential role of DHS.
- Continual sharing of best practices for engaging and supporting FFN care givers.
- Continual focus on quality, no matter where the children are (home or in some form of care.)
- Utilization of existing systems to support and connect to FFN Care.

Recommendations for Next Steps

The Family, Friend and Neighbor Care Committee recommends the following strategies for next steps. Many of the recommendations can be accomplished through partnerships supporting Early Childhood Iowa.

- A short-term strategy: conduct a workshop at the Early Childhood Iowa Congress to continue conversations from the Summit. This workshop is scheduled at the February 2009 Congress.
- Develop deliberate steps to further conversations on an ongoing basis with community members and state-level policy makers about Family, Friend and Neighbor Care.
- Continue to examine other states’ infrastructure to support FFN Care.

- Encourage local Community Empowerment Boards to explore how the programs they fund can support FFN Care.
- Identify tools and resources that can be provided to FFN providers to support their work, including materials for grandparents caring for their grandchildren and develop a state resource directory that can be used by CCR&R Networks, cooperative extension offices, and public libraries
- Continue to examine the experiences of and lessons learned from other states' that have identified connections between Family, Friend and Neighbor Care and Child Care Quality Rating Systems.
- Explore the possibility of developing a system of child care that provides clear definitions and identifies necessary supports for this type of child care.

The Iowa Empowerment Board is committed to ongoing exploration and learning on this subject. We also encourage an intentional, well-coordinated, comprehensive approach to next steps. This report, along with other information gathered during the course of our study, the Summit, and other activities related to this topic is available at the following web site.

http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/family_care.asp.