

Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

Questions/Comments:
Kris Bell, (515) 281-4537
Kris.bell@iowa.gov



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The last 21 Community Empowerment areas to be designated, have been redesignated following action by the Iowa Empowerment Board on January 9, 2004. This allows the local Community Empowerment boards to receive Early Childhood and School Ready funding.

Iowa Empowerment Board Approves New Redesignation Cycles, Seeks Adding new Agency Director, and Changes the Definition of the Indicator, Teen Births

In action taken by the Iowa Empowerment Board on January 9, nineteen (19) areas will be allowed to seek redesignation in the fall of 2005, with recommendations made to the Iowa Empowerment Board in January 2006.

The areas included in the next cycle are:

Adams; Appanoose, Davis, Lucas and Monroe; Blackhawk; Boone; Buchanan, Delaware and Fayette; Cass, Mills and Montgomery; Clinton and Jackson; Decatur; Dubuque; Emmet; Hardin; Lee/Van Buren; Linn; Johnson; Jones; Polk; Pottawattamie; Scott; and Story.

The Board approved a language change to the Iowa Code, to be introduced this legislative session, to add the Director of the Department of Economic Development as a member of the Iowa Empowerment Board. Michael Blouin, current Director of the agency, has attended recent Iowa Empowerment Board meetings as a non-voting member since last fall. The addition of economic development is a positive step in elevating the importance and relevance of early childhood care, health and education services and programs in supporting business and economic growth in Iowa.

The Iowa Empowerment Board also approved a definition change for the state wide result indicator "teen births". The new definition, the percent of births to mothers under age 20, is the accepted definition used by Iowa vital statistics and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and allows for easier comparisons to the other states which also submit the same information to the CDC. The previous definition was the birth rate for females age 17 and under. While this measure is useful and will continue to be collected, it could not be benchmarked with other states.

The Iowa Empowerment Board has also directed the technical assistance team to prepare a study on the administrative functions of local Community Empowerment Boards. Specifically, the study should discuss the pros and cons of paid coordinators, what creative means have been used locally to fund such a position, and recommendations on how to strengthen the infrastructure of local Community Empowerment areas, including how paid coordinators could be one of the means to accomplish this strengthening.

*Iowa's Early
Childhood Vision:*

**Every child,
beginning at birth,
will be healthy and
successful.**

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision:

Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.

"If we are to leave no child behind, we must begin by making sure that no child starts behind."

**Governor Thomas Vilsack
Condition of State Address
January 13, 2004**

Iowa Governor Vilsack in his Condition of the State to the General Assembly outlined his budget proposals for the 2004 legislative session.

Currently there is a gap between available resources and investments needed to support Iowa's values and needs in education, health care, safety and security, while holding the line on local property taxes. People born in Iowa and those who move to Iowa have taken advantage of Iowa's historical position as a leader in education. If additional resources and investments are not made in education, teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, and less educational opportunities could occur. And while it is not in the printed text, Governor Vilsack did comment that every child should have the opportunity to attend a quality preschool.

Governor Vilsack recommended to fill the gap, Iowa needs to modernize the sales tax system by expanding the base of services subject to sales tax; increase the tax on a pack of cigarettes by 60 cents and; close tax loopholes and to collect sufficient revenues to fully fund property tax credits.

He suggested that by expanding sales tax to services like engineering, surveying, accounting and the like, support for schools to increase by \$131 million and suggested that additional funds would be available for [community] empowerment and early childhood education. "If we are to leave no child behind, we must begin by making sure no child starts behind."

Upcoming Events

Iowa Empowerment Board
March 5, 2004

Day on the Hill
February 3 & 4, 2004
Hotel Fort Des Moines/
State Capitol

**Community Empowerment
Contacts Meeting**
Ames, Scheman Center
February 18, 2004
May 19, 2004

**Early Childhood Core
Stakeholders Meeting**
WDM Learning Center
February 19, 2004
May 18, 2004

January 2004 Board Meeting and Related Activities

The Iowa Empowerment Board met on January 9, 2004. The board approved the continuation of designated status to twenty one Community Empowerment Areas, adopted new language to the Iowa Code to add the Director of Economic Development to the membership, and adopted a new definition for the indicator, "teen births."

Update on the Iowa Department of Public Health Grant Opportunity

Iowa, through the Department of Public Health Bureau of Family Health applied for and received a State Maternal and Child Healthy Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant. IDPH will partner with the Early Childhood Core Stakeholders group to develop the single comprehensive plan for Iowa's early childhood system.

Early Care, Health and Education System Building Activities

- Iowa Learns Council (Team 1) - January 6 and 22
- Iowa Empowerment Board Meeting – January 9, March 5
- Early Childhood Core Stakeholders Committee Chair Meeting - January 12
- Systems Financing Project Oversight Committee – January 14 , February 11
- HRSA Grant Meeting - January 21
- Smart Start ITAG Meeting/Pre-conference meeting - January 25
- Smart Start National Conference - January 25 - 28
- Smart Start Workshop Presentation - January 27
- Early Care, Health and Education Congress Day on the Hill - February 3 & 4
- State Department Directors Meeting - February 11
- Northwest Iowa Community Empowerment/HFA - February 12
- Meetings wSmart Start Coach – January 22, February 13
- Core Stakeholders Meeting – February 19
- Congress Planning Meeting, February 26; March 18

Administrative Update – January 2004 - March 2004

Administrative Update – January 2004 - March 2004

Other Events and Activities

2004 National Smart Start Conference

Building Brighter Futures
January 25-28, 2004
Greensboro, NC

Whispers & Screams 2004 Annual Conference

Chapter 8: Passages
March 25 & 26, 2004
Ames

2004 Public Health Conference

*Advancing Public Health
Meeting the Challenge*
March 30-31, 2004
Ames

2003 Community Empowerment Annual Report Now Available

*If you have trouble accessing the
website version, you may contact
Shanell Wagler, Office of Empowerment
at (515) 281-4321*

Site Visits/Technical Assistance Activities

- Lee/Van Buren Board - January 6
- Winnebago Board - January 12
- Audubon, Carroll, Greene & Guthrie Central Point of Entry - January 22
- Accountability Training (Pilot site) LeMars - January 23
- Accountability Training (Pilot site) Ft. Dodge – February 6
- Family Connections/HFI Model/Prenatal; Mason City – February 2
- Empowerment Contacts meeting - February 18

Linkages/Outreach Activities

- Youth Development Grants Review
- Promise Jobs Coordinators - January 8, March 3
- Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network Business Loan Applications Review
- HOPES -HFI Program Managers - January 15
- Performance Measures Group - January 16, February 6 & 20, March 5 & 19
- IFDA Day on the Hill - January 20
- TEACH Advisory - January 20
- VISTA Volunteer Research Meeting – January 20
- Head Start Collaboration Office Advisory Council – January 21
- MCH Advisory Council – January 22
- State Child Care Advisory Council - January 22
- Early Childhood Assessment group - January 23,
- Iowa Assoc. of Community Action Agencies (Presentation) - January 27
- DCAA Commission – Presentation – January 27
- Urban Education Network – Day on the Hill Activities – January 27
- Early Childhood Special Education meeting - January 29-30
- Family Connection/ HFI - February 2
- National Community Action Academy - February 3 -6
- Iowa Community Betterment Project Review – February 9
- Iowa Child Protection Council - February 10
- Early Learning Standards Writing Committee - February 13, March 23
- Promise Jobs/FaDSS Coordination meeting - February 16
- DHS Liason Meeting - February 16, March 15
- Early Learning Standards Executive Committee - February 20
- SCRIPT – February 20
- Family Resource Network Parent Leadership Training - February 25
- Shared Vision – Parent Support – February 27
- Early ACCESS Liaison meeting - March 12
- Child Development Coordination Council - March 17
- Presentation to the Iowa County Boards of Supervisors (ISAC) – March 18
- FaDSS Council meeting - March 18
- Public Health Spring Conference - March 30 –31+

The 2003 Iowa Community Empowerment Annual Report was presented to the Iowa Empowerment Board on January 9 and will be posted to the state empowerment website at www.empowerment.state.ia.us.

The annual report has been reorganized with separate accountability sections for results and performance to align with the common language and local annual reports. Additional information has also been added to show how Iowa compares to other states on some key indicators of child well-being.

ECHE System Building Updates

Links to Empowerment Web sites

State :

www.empowerment.state.ia.us

Benton County -- NEW!

www.bccmpowerment.com

Buchanan Delaware Fayette:

www.bdfempowerment.org

Dubuque:

www.empowerdubuque.org

Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell:

www.fmccom.org

**HAWC (Howard, Allamakee,
Winneshiek):**

www.HAWC-Iowa.com

Hardin

<http://www.empowerhardin.com/>

Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright

www.buildingfamilies.net

Jasper:

<http://www.jaspercountypowerment.org/>

Linn:

www.linnempowerment.homestead.com/homepage.html

Marshall:

www.youthandviolence.org

Pocahontas, Calhoun and

Webster:

www.linking-families.com

Polk:

www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org

Scott:

www.scottcountypowerment.org/

Story:

<http://www.storycountyfamily.org>

Washington:

www.empowerwashington.org

Woodbury:

www.siouxlandship.org

Send us your web site address
and we'll include it in the next
newsletter.

Early Childhood Core Stakeholders

The Early Care Stakeholders last met on December 2, 2003. Department of Education Director, Ted Stilwell made some opening remarks. He thanked the stakeholders for the work they have done so far and commended them for taking the vision, *Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful*, and moving forward. Director Stilwell offered the following thoughts as the work continues:

- Continue to rethink ideas and be open to changing them in a collective way.
- We need to continue to put the turf issues aside; this is a challenge with few resources.
- Our vocabulary needs to include, *return on investment*; the budget crisis makes this important.
- *Human Capital* is another term we have to learn. This important in creating economic growth for individuals and the state. To do this, we need an economy that is strong on human capital which leads to the need for an educated population. This means we have to focus on early education and early learning and not waiting until high school to prepare young people for the work force.

Brief reports were made by the chairs of the six component groups (professional development; quality services and programs; parent, family and community engagement; resources and funding; governance, planning and, administration; accountability for results) with most noting that only initial conversations had been held. The Chairs agreed to meet prior to the next full meeting of the Early Care Stakeholders to operationalize their work, develop communication plans, and to prioritize their initial tasks.

The Early Care Stakeholders decided to meet on a quarterly basis in 2004 on:

- February 19
- May 18
- September 14

Announcements and agendas will be sent to all members prior to those dates.

Iowa Learns Council

The early childhood, or Team 1 of the Iowa Learns Council met on January 6, 2004 and is scheduled to meet again on January 22, 2004. Max Phillips, President of Qwest, shared his views on the importance of early childhood. While he sees the need to develop an early care, health and education system, he encouraged the team to think of immediate, short term and long term recommendations. The team spent some time brainstorming ideas and will continue the dialogue at its January 22nd meeting.

For more information on the Iowa Learns Council, visit www.state.ia.us/iowalearns.

Urban Education Network (UEN) Early Childhood Financing Study Group

The UEN work group met on December 9, 2003. Its initial membership is made up of the school superintendents of the 8 largest school districts in Iowa and as well as the directors and staff from the Departments of Education, Health, Management, Human Rights and Human Services, as well as the Child and Family Policy Center. A major agenda item for the UEN is early childhood education for all children in the state. The finance study group was formed to investigate what it would take to finance an early care, health and education system to serve all of Iowa's young children and their families. A business plan will be developed and shared with business and industry leaders to inform and enlist their support in furthering their support in developing such a system.

Early Care, Health and Education System Framework

The Early Childhood Core Stakeholders have developed and adopted a conceptual framework to describe an early care, health and education system. The framework has been adopted as a starting point for the Iowa Learns Council, Department of Education Early Learning Team and the Urban Education Network, Early Childhood Financing Study work group.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS TO ACHIEVE THE RESULTS AND VISION

Quality Services and Programs

- A. Expand Early Learning Environments and Opportunities
- B. Advance Children's Healthy Physical and Mental Development
- C. Create and Maintain Links with Community Resources
- D. Incorporate Best Practice Knowledge For Early Childhood Education, Family Support and Health.

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

- A. Support Parents as Consumers
- B. Increase Workplace Commitments to Families and Business and Community Involvement in Early Care, Health and Education
- C. Increase Community Awareness of Early Care, Health and Education
- D. Increase Advocacy for Supportive Child and Family Policies

Professional Development

- A. Create/Expand a Credentialing System and Compensation Package
- B. Promote quality training and education
- C. Promote core professional knowledge

Accountability for Results

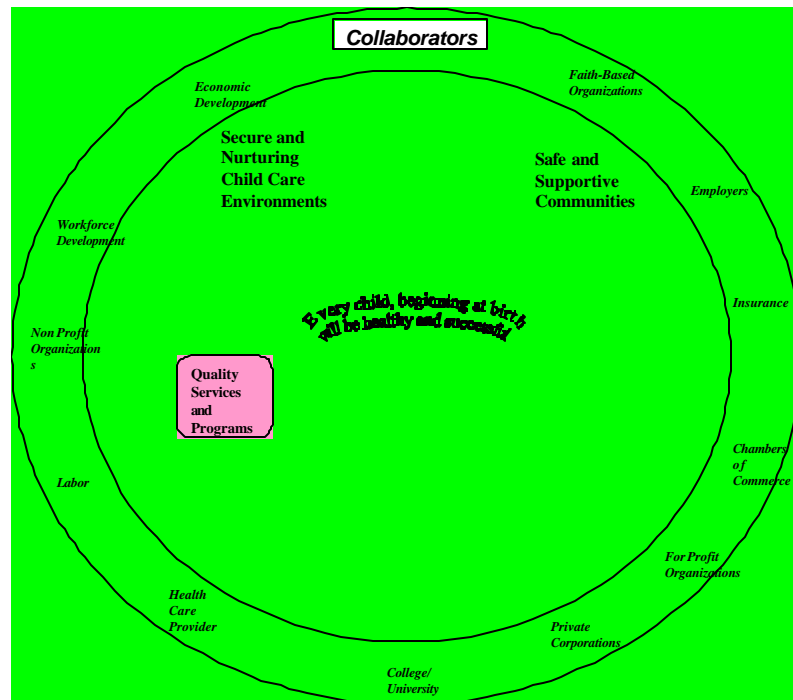
- A. Define Appropriate Results
- B. Establish Mechanisms to Collect, Manage and Report Results Information
- C. Assure that Results are Used for Informed Decision Making

Resources and Funding

- A. Identify the Costs and Financing Structure of a Quality System
- B. Identify and Secure Potential Revenue Sources

Governance, Planning and Administration State Level and Local Level

- Demonstrate Effective Collaborative Leadership
- Coordination of Strategic Planning
- Partnership with Local Level
- System Oversight
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Sustainability



The center circle represents the **Vision** for all of Iowa's children. The second band, **System Components**, serves as the link needed to link the vision and the desired results. The third band, **Results** states the desired measurable results to gauge progress toward the vision. The outer band describes the **Collaborators** necessary to assure a unified approach in developing the quality services and supports to reach the results and vision.

Based on the work of Kagan, Sharon, Back to Basics: Essential Components of an American Early Care and Education System, the Smart Start Intensive Technical Assistance Grant, Seven Essential Components of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Initiative, and the Center for Schools and Communities.

Proposal for an Iowa Child Care Quality Rating System

How will a QRS benefit parents and providers?

Provider recognition and incentives – The rating achieved by a provider would be publicly acknowledged and used by state agencies and community partners who provide referrals to parents seeking child care. Providers could also receive a monetary award or equipment/materials for achieving a higher rating. Iowa child care providers who demonstrate an interest in enhancing their ability to provide a safe learning environment for children could receive support in the form of training, technical assistance, and resources that improve quality.

Parents' access to high quality care – The QRS will give parents a reliable information source to help them make one of the most important choices they can make for their children – selecting a child care provider that will provide a safe learning environment while the parent works or attends school.

How will the QRS benefit our children?

Safety – Registration and licensing provides basic quality standards for providers, including minimum health and safety. By encouraging providers to achieve ratings that exceed regulation, children will be served by providers with higher levels of training and education and served in settings with improved ratios, group sizes, equipment and materials, etc.

Quality – The rating system would provide an incentive for providers to maintain higher quality standards. In doing so, these providers would incorporate activities and practices that promote early learning and school readiness for children.

"Since 2000, three task forces appointed by Governor Thomas Vilsack have called for improvements in child care services. Both the Governor's 21st Century Workforce and the Governor's Iowa 2010 Strategic Planning Group recommended that child care improvement was an essential precondition of economic growth and development in the state. Members of the Governor's Child Care and Early Education Task Force concluded that the state of Iowa needs high quality child care programs that combine early learning experiences and care."

An ad hoc committee of the State Child Care Advisory Council (SCCAC) has reviewed the various approaches to rating systems for child care providers. Iowa's current approach to recognizing quality child care includes registration for child development homes and licensing of child care centers. In addition, the Legislature has established the "Gold Seal" provider program which recognizes providers who achieve accreditation and maintain compliance with regulation. The ad hoc committee has recommended that the *next step* for enhancing the quality of Iowa's child care is to implement a *voluntary* Quality Rating System for child care providers.

While no decisions have yet been made about Iowa's structure, the voluntary system could include multiple levels that providers would achieve based on standards or achievements that are known to lead to positive child outcomes – these might include:

- Registered or licensed facility
- History of compliance with key health and safety standards
- Program characteristics such as group size, adult to child ratio, training beyond regulation requirements, etc.
- Education level of the provider(s)
- Achievement of national standards, such as accreditation with NAEYC (centers) or NAFCC (homes), or meeting Head Start Performance Standards

The recommendation is to spend the next year designing a QRS that "fits" for Iowa. Providers, parents, and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide input through community response sessions that will be held throughout the state. More information on these meetings will be made available in future issues of this newsletter. The timeline is to begin implementation of a QRS by July 1, 2005.

Finally, a QRS system is only one part of Iowa's plan for improving child care and increasing the availability of safe, affordable child care for all Iowa families. By implementing a [voluntary] multi-level QRS, Iowa will increase the percentage of:

1. Children who receive care in quality settings
2. Parents who can identify quality child care settings and increasingly choose quality child care settings
3. Providers who participate in Iowa's quality rating system

For more information on the QRS effort, contact Kathy Sorrell, Chair of the State Child Care Advisory Council -- (712) 322-8800 / ksorrell@cbiowa.com

The background report put together by the ad hoc committee can be read at www.iowachildnetwork.org.

Child Care Quality Rating System (QRS) Myths and Facts

How would a QRS impact providers and parents?

MYTH: *Parents can barely afford child care now. How will they be able to afford it when higher quality providers charge parents more for care?*

FACT:

- The QRS gives parents more information and choice as they select a provider.
- While parent's selection of providers may improve as the number of quality-rated providers increase, a provider's participation in the rating system is voluntary. A provider will not be required to make investments in their programs or achieve higher levels. Those that do will establish rates based on the economic factors in their area and what they believe the market (i.e., parents) can afford.

MYTH: *Shouldn't parents be allowed to make their own decisions about child care?*

FACT:

- The QRS does not take the decision away from parents -- it simply gives them more information as they select a child care provider.
- Since parents can't be present in their child care facility the entire day, they have limited opportunities to gauge the quality of their provider's care. A QRS would provide further assurance to parents that health and safety standards, along with other indicators that lead to high quality care, are being met and maintained.
- Some parents understand what to look for in seeking a child care provider who offers a higher level of care. Many other parents lack the information and time to fully assess the broad range of health and safety practices as well as the developmentally appropriate and early learning activities that are indicators of quality care.

MYTH: *A QRS will require providers to spend more money when they are already struggling to keep their businesses going.*

FACT:

- No provider in Iowa will be required to participate in the QRS. The system may provide incentives for providers who wish to build their skills in child care and support may be available through training grants and technical assistance.

MYTH: *You are labeling providers, and providers don't want to be labeled.*

FACT:

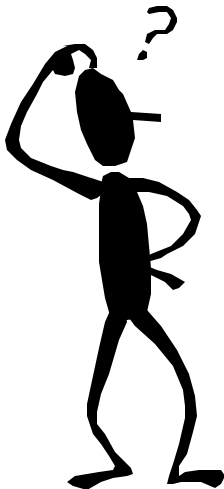
- The QRS is a voluntary system. Those providers who are currently non-registered do not have to become registered. Providers do not have to achieve a higher ranking beyond registration and licensing. However, providers who have maintained compliance with state standards and achieved quality levels beyond regulation should be rewarded for their efforts on behalf of Iowa's children.

Where can I find more information about the development of the proposed Quality Rating System?

Contact the Chair of the State Child Care Advisory Council:

Kathy Sorrell
(712) 322-8800

ksorrell@cbiowa.com



**2004 Public Health
Conference**
*Advancing Public
Health:
Meeting the
Challenge*
March 30 -31, 2004

The 2004 Public Health Conference to be held at the Sheman Center provides and excellent opportunity for public health professionals, public and private sector colleagues, and parents to gather information and resources, share experiences, discuss policy issues and strategies and connect with each other. Through plenary sessions, concurrent issue-based sessions, and business meetings, participants will have the opportunity to explore the future of public health and learn how to maximize resources to ensure quality programs and services.

Featured speakers:

- Marion Nestle, Professor and Chair of Nutrition and Food Studies, New York University, *Advancing Public Health: The Challenge of Food Politics*
- Paula Duncan, Director, Vermont Child Health Improvement Project, *Building Partnerships between Public Health and Communities*
- Rick Foster, President, Foster and Hicks, *How We Choose to Be Happy*

Concurrent session topics include:

- Competent workforce
- Obesity
- Medical homes
- Public health core functions and essential services
- Public health and family centered services
- Mental health needs of young children in foster care
- Community oral health
- Linking pre-natal and family support providers

Early registration deadline is March 1 and final registration deadline is March 23, 2004.

For more information contact Sarah Patkin (515) 963-8664 or mspatkin@yahoo.com

**Whisper & Screams
Annual Conference**
Chapter 8: Passages
March 25 & 26,
2004

The annual *Whispers & Screams* conference will be held March 25 and 26, 2004 at the Hotel at Gate way Center, Ames.

This is an annual conference sponsored by the Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force. Previous *Whispers & Screams* programs and the discussion they generated helped to define what it means to provide equal services for girls and boys "at-risk" or involved with the juvenile justice system, by recognizing that their needs are different. The conference has brought girls' voices and experiences to the forefront and disseminated information and suggestions for gender-specific programming that have been implemented across the state. In addition to basic and advanced workshops on gender-specific program planning, *Whispers & Screams* will continue to offer attendees specific information on female adolescent development and experiences, as well as tools for working with girls involved with or at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.

For information and registration, contact the Kathy Nestby at (515) 281-6915 or (800) 558-4427. Download the registration brochure:
<http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw/girls.html>

DHS Hires Substance Abuse Consultants

The Iowa Department of Human Services in the process of hiring one social worker in each of the eight service areas to provide consultation and educational services regarding substance abuse issues, primarily methamphetamines, to individuals and groups.

Some of the activities would include, but not necessarily limited to:

- **Community Education/Consultation** to provide information, training, and assistance to DHS staff, community partners, service providers, and local officials concerning substance abuse. Inherent in this responsibility is meeting regularly with various community/provider representative.
- **Case Consultation** to DHS field workers regarding specialized knowledge of substance abuse and its effect on specific cases.

For more information contact the DHS Service Area office in your service area.

New Grant Website Offers One-Stop Shopping

NEW GRANT WEBSITE OFFERS ONE-STOP SHOPPING FOR INFORMATION ON APPLYING FOR FEDERAL GRANTS

In December 2003, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson unveiled a single, comprehensive website that will contain information about finding and applying for all federal grant programs. The website, Grants.gov <<<http://www.grants.gov/>>>, makes it easier for organizations to learn about and apply for federal grants. The website has information about more than 800 available grant programs involving all 26 federal grant-making agencies. These agencies together award more than \$360 billion in grant funds. The site provides information in a standardized format across agencies and includes a "Find Grant Opportunities" feature to help applicants find potential funding opportunities. The site also contains an "Apply for Grants" feature that greatly simplifies the application process by allowing applicants to download, complete and submit applications for specific grant opportunities from any federal grant-making agency. To date, application packages have been posted to the Grants.gov <<<http://www.grants.gov/>>> website by five agencies -- the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Education, Energy, Justice and HHS. This section will be expanded in the coming months as federal agencies continue to post application information about additional grant opportunities.

New, Free Early Literacy Magazine



A new, free early literacy magazine aims to improve reading achievement among African-American children by educating parents on child development and giving them activities and resources to boost their children's reading skills.

The National Urban League, a nonprofit group that aims to empower African Americans, teamed up with children's book publisher Scholastic and State Farm Insurance to launch the first issue of Read and Rise magazine in December.

The magazine is divided into sections based on age groups: infants and toddlers, preschool (ages 3 to 4), kindergarten, and first grade through third grade. At each age level, the magazine tells parents what their children should be able to do and offers advice on improving children's performance.

In addition to information on child development and family activities, the magazine gives specific book recommendations for each age group. Read and Rise also lists information for other literacy resources such as Reading is Fundamental, the National Center for Family Literacy and the American Library Association. Read and Rise magazine can be downloaded from the National Urban League's Web site http://www.nul.org/programs/education/read_rise.html



There are more than 8 million uninsured children in the United States and approximately 40,000 of those uninsured children who are eligible for public health insurance programs live in Iowa. Schools and child care centers are a vital link to help identify and enroll these eligible yet uninsured children.

Did you know:

- 26 percent of all Hispanic children are uninsured.
- 22 percent of children in low-income families lack health care coverage.
- 16 percent of all African-American children are uninsured
- A Florida study showed that uninsured children are 25 percent more likely to miss school than insured children.
- Uninsured children are less likely to receive the proper medical care for childhood illnesses such as sore throats, earaches and asthma.
- 65 percent of uninsured children have at least one parent who worked full time throughout the year.

Many people who qualify are unaware of the benefits children may receive. Survey results show seven out of ten parents with unenrolled children would enroll them in their State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) or Medicaid if they knew they qualified and 70 percent of uninsured children are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage under Medicaid and SCHIP.

Learn how you can help link children to health care coverage! Covering Kids and Families will be hosting an ICN workshop, hawk-i Outreach to Child Care, on February 18th from 10-12 am. The purpose of the workshop is to promote awareness among professionals working with child care providers about health care coverage available to children through the hawk-i program.

If you would like to register go to <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/conferences.asp> and scroll to hawk-i Outreach to Child Care and click on click to register. Nursing and social work CEU's may be available.



Since we first announced an Iowa tax credit outreach campaign aimed at Iowa families in November 2003, some exciting things have happened. Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral and the National Women's Law Center has partnered with the Tax Credit Coalition at the Institute of Economic and Social Development.

Through the National Women's Law Center grant we have been able to focus on three areas:

- 1) Public Service Announcements
Beginning Jan 16, 2004 public service announcements in both English and Spanish will be aired approximately 2000 times statewide on a variety of cable stations.

(If you have a contact at any of your local network stations you can persuade to air the public service announcement, please call Cathy Wheatcraft at 515-883-1206 ext. 126. We can get a copy to you within 3-4 days.)

- 2) Direct Mailing to Child Care Providers
By January 19 a mailing will go out to all child care providers identified on the Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral data base. The mailings will include a letter encouraging providers to check into their own eligibility for tax credits and fliers to distribute to families. Fliers are printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other.

The mailing includes 1825 licensed centers, including Head Start and Department of Education classrooms. Licensed centers will receive 50 fliers each. 9,787 registered and non-registered identified home providers will receive 6 copies of the flyer. Providers may make more copies of the flyer as needed.

- 3) Email distribution of the fliers and free tax assistance sites to a wide variety of agencies and professionals who work with families who may qualify for the tax credits.

Both the fliers and the public service announcements direct parents to call "2-1-1" for the locations of the free tax assistance sites. The 211 system works is up and running in a majority of the state. If an area does not have a 211 calling area finalized, callers will be referred to the Tax Coalition's toll free number 1-800-829-1040 where someone will assist them.

This is where we need your help. Some ways you can help get the word out to Iowa's hard working families include:

- Forward the flyer and free tax assistance sites to other agencies and professionals who work with families. While, some may receive the email multiple times, we believe receiving the information more than once is preferable to being left out.
- Copy the flyer and Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program information as needed and distribute directly to families you work with.
- Post the flyer on bulletin boards where families may see it in your agencies or other locations you identify.
- Post the flyer and VITA program information on your agency website.

For more information on federal and state tax credits, visit the National Women's Law Center website at www.nwlc.org, the Institute for Social and Economic Development at www.ised.org, and the Anne E. Casey Foundation website at www.eitc.info. Or call 1-800-829-1040.