

# FY'27 ECI Statewide Performance Measures

## Tool O: Guidance Document

This document is a supplementary resource produced by the North Iowa Children's Alliance Early Childhood Area Board. It is not endorsed by the State Early Childhood Iowa Board.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to current and prospective contractors regarding service descriptions, local policies, and program expectations as they apply to specific service types. It is intended to help contractors better understand local implementation requirements and expectations when applying for or administering Early Childhood Iowa-funded programs.

*Subject to change without notice.*

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## Iowa Code

Iowa Code, 256I.4(5) – Requires the Early Childhood Iowa State Board and local Early Childhood Iowa Arwa Boards with common performance measures and data reporting requirements, funded services, programs, and activities.

## Non-Duplication of Funds

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) funds may not be used to duplicate services or expenses that are already supported by another funding source. Contractors must ensure that ECI funds supplement existing resources and are used only when no other funding is available or sufficient to support the activity. Programs are expected to demonstrate coordination with other funding streams and avoid overlapping payments for the same service, item, or participant.

## Reporting Periods

### Local:

- Q1: Due October 15<sup>th</sup>, for the period covered from July 1-September 30
- Q2: Due January 15<sup>th</sup>, for the period covered from July 1 – December 31
- Q3: Due April 15<sup>th</sup>, for the period covered from July 1-March 31
- Q4: Due July 15<sup>th</sup>, for the period covered from July 1-June 30

### State: (reported by the local Board to the State Board

- Mid-Year Performance & Financial: Estimated, February 15 \* subject to change
- Annual Report: August 30<sup>th</sup> \* subject to change
- Annual Report Financial Report: September 15 \* subject to change

## Program Definition

A **program** is an organized set of services, activities, or functions operated by an entity and delivered at a specific site. A program may exist within a site, and an entity may operate multiple programs across one or more sites. However, individual classrooms, rooms, or instructional groupings within a site are not considered programs. Classrooms are components of a program, not standalone programs.

## Change of Condition Questions

These are the questions asking a service recipient to report on changes they experienced related to the service and/or their satisfaction with the service. Knowing how many people answered these questions improves data quality and allows us to more accurately represent the impact of the service.

## Age Categories for Data Collection

For direct service types that require the collection of age of children as of September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current year receiving services, the following breakdowns are utilized.

- Prenatal (not an option for all service types)

- Children 0-1 (0-11 months)
- Children 1-2 (12-23 months)
- Children 2-3 (24-35 months)
- Children 3-4 (36-47 months)
- Children 4-5 (48-59 months)
- Children 5-6 (60-71 months)

## Quality Initiatives Definition

Programs meeting a quality initiative, the quality initiatives include:

- IQ4K (current level at data collection) – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- IQPPS
- NAEYC
- NAFCC
- Head Start grantee
- PAT
- HFA
- IFSC

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## Policies & Tools

|   | Reference            |
|---|----------------------|
| NICA Allowable / Non Allowable Expenditures | <a href="#">HERE</a> |
| Tool G                                      | <a href="#">HERE</a> |
| Tool FF                                     | <a href="#">HERE</a> |
| Family Support Operations Manual            | <a href="#">HERE</a> |
| Tool O (Performance Measures)               | <a href="#">HERE</a> |
| Tool G                                      | <a href="#">HERE</a> |

# Service Types

## Car Seat Safety

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Designed to ensure the safe transportation of young children by providing access to properly installed car seats and educating caregivers on correct usage. Through targeted funding and additional resources, this service type enables the distribution of car seats to families in need, with special attention to emergent situations where immediate support is required. Trained professionals conduct car seat checks to assess whether seats are installed correctly, addressing common safety concerns and correcting improper installations on the spot. This proactive approach significantly reduces the risk of injury during travel, ensuring children are secured according to safety standards. The program's effectiveness is measured by the number of car seats inspected, the percentage installed correctly, and the improvements made during check-ups. By promoting proper car seat use and supporting families with critical safety equipment, car seat safety support enhances child safety, reduces preventable injuries, and provides peace of mind for caregivers. Non allowable use of funds: Car Seat Technician certification fees of \$95 is paid for through generous funding provided by the Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau.

## Dental

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Designed to promote oral health and prevent dental issues among children through early detection, education, and coordinated care. This service type provides dental screenings to children across various programs and community locations, regardless of their payment source. Screenings assess oral health, identify high-risk children, and detect early signs of decay or demineralization, allowing for timely intervention. Children identified as high-risk receive dental care coordination to connect families with appropriate treatment and preventive services. This proactive approach helps to reduce the incidence of untreated dental issues, supporting long-term oral health and overall well-being. The program's impact is measured by the number of children screened, the identification of high-risk cases, and the successful coordination of follow-up care. By prioritizing early detection and accessible dental services, dental health support services help to prevent serious oral health problems, improve health outcomes, and promote lifelong healthy habits.

- High-risk means a child who has signs of oral health needs as detailed in the above narrative (i.e. decay, demineralization, limited hygiene, untreated dental issues regarding oral health)
- # of children enrolled in all programs/locations served is based on all possible children (this provides a denominator number to then create a percentage based on dividing the number of children possible by the number of children funded by ECI).

## Public Awareness/Child Fairs

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Designed to inform and empower families by increasing awareness of local services and resources that support early childhood development and family well-being. Through targeted funding and community partnerships, these events such as community fairs, informational sessions, and resource expos bring families together to learn about available programs, health services, educational opportunities, and family support networks. Activities are

strategically planned to reach a board audience, maximizing community impact and connecting families with essential resources. Participants are provided with information on local services, encouraged to engage in community programs, and educated on the benefits of early intervention and developmental support. Effectiveness is measured by the number of activities held, family participation rates, and feedback indicating increased awareness of community services. Families are also surveyed on their understanding of local resources and any changes in their ability to access support for their children. By fostering community connections and raising awareness, public awareness and community engagement events strengthen families' ability to access crucial services, contributing to healthier, more resilient communities.

## Family Support Services

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*All data reported for family support home visitation services will be reported in DAISEY and follow the FSSD Data Dictionary.*

Designed to strengthen families by providing personalized guidance, education, and resources that promote healthy development and well-being. Through dedicated funding, these services support families with young children by offering home visits, group-based parent education, and developmental screenings. The program prioritizes engagement with families from diverse backgrounds, ensuring inclusivity across different races, ethnicities, household size, and income levels. Special attention is given to prenatal enrollment and first-time mothers, providing early intervention and support during critical stages of development. Trained professionals conduct home visits that focus on enhancing parenting skills, promoting child development, and connecting families to community resources.

Group-based parent education meetings offer opportunities for shared learning and peer support, fostering stronger community connections. Developmental screenings are performed for age-eligible children, with referrals made for early intervention services when needed. Additionally, mothers are screened using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, and referrals are provided for further support if necessary. The impact of family support services is measured through improvements in family functioning, communication, and problem-solving skills. Families also report increased social support, better access to community resources, greater understanding of child development, and stronger nurturing and attachment with their children. By focusing on education, connection, and early intervention, family support services empower families to build resilient, healthy environments that support children's growth and success.

- ECI Tool Reference: Tool FF, Tool G, Iowa Family Support Operations Manual
- *Programs should be able to demonstrate the ability to implement a credentialed program to fidelity upon application.*

## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations for the Workforce

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Designed to support the emotional and developmental well-being of young children by enhancing the capacity of professional, caregivers, and community members who work with

them. This support strengthens staff confidence, job satisfaction, and provides an opportunity for reflection of various strategies to support children and families. This support empowers adults to meet children's needs with confidence and empathy, building a foundation for lifelong well-being.

*Programs are not allowed to bill for individual child evaluations.*

## Professional Development

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Designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of professionals working in community-based services. This service type provides opportunities for workforce development across key categories, including early learning, family support, special needs, health and mental health, and nutrition. Funds are allocated to support a range of professional development activities, including workshops, training sessions, and continuing education programs that equip participants with best practices, evidence-based strategies, and the latest research in their respective fields. These activities are tracked by category to ensure targeted skill-building and impactful learning experiences. The effectiveness of the professional development opportunities is measured through participant satisfaction surveys, capturing feedback on the quality, relevance, and overall impact of the training received. This commitment to continuous learning not only strengthens individual competencies but also elevates the quality of services provided to families and communities. By investing in professional growth, professional development promotes a skilled, confident workforce capable of delivering high-quality, effective support.

*Professional development expenses may be included as part of a program's overall budget and do not need to be requested as a separate funding category. In most cases, these requests should support the professional growth of the program as a whole rather than individual staff members. Examples may include CPR/First Aid training, conference scholarships, group training opportunities, or other professional learning activities that strengthen program quality and workforce capacity.*

## Early Care and Education Scholarships

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Designed to expand access to quality early learning opportunities for children and families who face financial barriers. Through dedicated funding and additional support, scholarships are provided to help cover the cost of early education programs, enabling families to access safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environments. These scholarships prioritize children from diverse backgrounds, taking into account household size, federal poverty level, marital status of the primary caregiver, and the education level of the head of household to ensure equitable access to early learning. Participating programs are encouraged to meet quality initiatives and maintain high standards. Scholarships also support developmental screenings, helping to identify children who may benefit from further evaluation or services. Data collected from these screenings ensure that children are meeting age-appropriate milestones and receiving the support they need to thrive.

As a funder of last resort, the scholarships require documentation of Child Care Assistance decline to confirm eligibility. Programs that receive back pay from CCA eligible family, may

apply EC scholarship for the tuition rate difference.

All families who are at 160% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or below must apply for Child Care Assistance (CCA). The state has dedicated staff trained to help families navigate CCA questions. <https://www.iowa.gov/how-do-i-apply-child-care-assistance>

ECIA's will develop a local application to verify the family is not eligible for other financial support for this care and reason why no other financial support eligibility was met. The local ECIA will develop a board policy to document their scholarship rates/ranges and eligibility for a scholarship to be made payable to the child care or preschool program on the family's behalf. If an ECI chooses to pay the tuition difference between CCA and their program's tuition rate, the ECI will need to include their scholarship plan for rates and eligibility in their board approved policy.

To ensure continued eligibility and program alignment, scholarship recipients are required to complete a follow-up review annually. This process verifies ongoing participation in quality programs and assesses any changes in eligibility status, promoting accountability and effective use of resources.

By reducing financial barriers and promoting high-quality early learning experiences, these scholarships empower families, enhance child development, and contribute to long-term educational success. ECI may provide funding for scholarships to programs who are eligible to accept CCA and do accept CCA, but requesting families have a verified income outside of current CCA eligibility (i.e. 161% up to 200% FPL).

ECI may provide funding for scholarships to programs who are authorized by the Iowa Department of Education as a preschool program without child care licensure. ECI cannot provide funding for scholarships for time paid for by Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) or Head Start. Time beyond these funding streams may be supported by a scholarship if there is a need (200% FPL or below) and no other funding source is available.

A scholarship should not be provided to an early learning program (i.e. child care or preschool) that is not officially associated with either the Iowa Department of Education or the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.

Temporary scholarships are short-term Early Care and Education (ECE) scholarships provided for three months or less to ensure a child's continued access to early learning while a family awaits the outcome of Child Care Assistance eligibility determination or other potential funding sources. These scholarships act as a bridge during periods of financial uncertainty, preventing disruptions in care and supporting program stability. Temporary scholarships may be issued only when the family has submitted a CCA application and is awaiting approval or denial, or the family is pursuing another funding resource and documentation is pending, and the ECI area has verified that no other financial support is currently available. These scholarships ensure continuity of care, reduce financial barriers, and support families during transitional periods while maintaining alignment with ECI's role as a funder of last resort.

## Scholarship Coordination

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Designed to expand access to high-quality programs by managing and distributing financial support to eligible families. Scholarships are made available to ease the financial burden of participating in community-based programs that promote learning, development, and well-being. The coordination process includes managing applications, determining eligibility, and awarding scholarships to qualified recipients. The effectiveness of scholarship coordination services is measured by the number of applications processed, scholarships awarded, and the reach of funding across community programs. Reasons for non-awarded scholarships are documented to inform improvements in outreach and eligibility criteria. To ensure continued eligibility and program alignment, scholarship recipients are required to complete a follow-up review annually. This process verifies ongoing participation in quality programs and assesses any changes in eligibility status, promoting accountability and effective use of resources. By streamlining access to financial assistance and promoting high-quality services, this initiative helps bridge gaps in affordability and increases opportunities for families to access vital community programs.

## Health Services

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Designed to ensure children receive essential health screenings and follow-up care, prioritizing early detection and intervention. As a funder of last resort, this service only provides support when no other funding options are available, ensuring that critical health needs are met without duplicating existing resources. Through dedicated funding and community partnerships, comprehensive health screenings such as hearing, vision, developmental, and other critical health concerns early, enabling timely referrals for follow-up services or treatment. This proactive approach helps prevent minor issues from becoming significant health barriers, supporting long-term well-being. The program's impact is measured by the number of children screened, the age of children served, and the effectiveness of follow-up care. Data is also collected on the number of referrals made and the percentage of children who successfully receive treatment. By acting as a safety net when other funding is not available, health services support ensures that every child has access to vital health services, promoting healthier outcomes and stronger community well-being. High-risk means a child who displays need for further screening (i.e. vision, hearing)

## Literacy

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Designed to foster a love of reading and strengthen early language development in children by empowering families with the tools and knowledge to engage in literacy activities. Through targeted funding and community partnerships, this service provides resources and educational support to families, encouraging daily reading habits and interactive storytelling. Families participating in the program receive guidance on effective reading techniques and the importance of discussing new words and concepts during story time. By promoting these interactive literacy practices, children are exposed to richer language experiences, enhancing their vocabulary, comprehension, and overall readiness for learning. The program's effectiveness is measured by the number of children and families served, as well as the reported increase in daily reading and language-building activities. Families share feedback on changes in their reading habits and their engagement with children during

storytelling. The cost per child is tracked to ensure efficient use of resources while maximizing impact. By equipping families to create strong literacy foundations, literacy support services help children develop critical language skills that are essential for future learning and academic success.

*Programs should demonstrate a clear plan for collecting and utilizing **Change of Condition** survey responses. Contractors are expected to outline how surveys will be distributed, collected, and used to inform program improvements and measure the impact of services provided.*

## Essential Needs

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Designed to provide immediate relief and support to families facing economic challenges by addressing fundamental necessities such as food, clothing, diapers, and other critical household items. Through strategic funding and community partnerships with faith-based organizations, non-profits, and contracted service providers, this program ensures families can meet their basic needs while stabilizing their living situations. Families accessing this service receive assistance through community-based networks that offer essential items during times of crisis or need. Support is provided both to first-time visitors and returning households, ensuring continuity and reliability.

Special attention is given to families with children aged five and under, recognizing the importance of stability during early development. Beyond meeting immediate needs, essential needs support services also connect families to additional community resources, providing guidance and assistance in completing applications for further support services. This wraparound approach not only addresses urgent necessities but also fosters long-term resilience by increasing awareness of local services and strengthening community connections. Program effectiveness is measured by the number of households served, the frequency of visits for essential items, and the successful linkage of families to broader support networks. By addressing basic needs and connecting families to extended services, essential needs support services help promote stability, well-being, and self-sufficiency within communities.

## Transportation

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Designed to remove barriers to access by providing reliable transportation for children to essential programs and services. This service ensures that children have consistent, safe transportation options that promote attendance and engagement in critical learning and support programs. The program serves children of preschool ages by offering scheduled transportation on key service days. This consistent access helps children maintain regular attendance, which is crucial for learning and development.

Transportation support is tracked by the number of days services are provided, the number of children served, and the frequency of utilization. For example, if 4 kids are receiving service and service is available 100 days, then  $4 \times 100 = 400$  days of transportation provided. The effectiveness of transportation support services is measured by the cost per child, attendance rates, and the number of days children participate in programs due to accessible transportation. By addressing logistical barriers, this service ensures that more children can access vital community programs, supporting children's development.

## Quality Improvement for Early Childhood

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Designed to enhance the standards and effectiveness of programs that serve young children and their families. This service supports a wide range of community-based programs, family support initiatives, and early learning providers. The initiative emphasizes strengthening program quality through evidence-based strategies, accreditation support, and group-based learning opportunities. Programs are encouraged to achieve and maintain high standards, contributing to better outcomes for children and families. Mini grants may be used to help programs purchase materials or receive professional services focused on feasibility studies tailored to strategies focused on improving learning environments and service delivery. By investing in quality improvement, this service helps programs elevate their standards, expand their impact, and help children receive high-quality care and education in their earliest years.

### **Intent of Service Type:**

- Mini grants could be issued to the early learning environment (family support or early learning program)
- Definition of materials: Items or contribution of funds for items
- Group-based strategy
- Mini grants could be issued to provide professional services to guide community planning efforts

*Mini-grants are typically administered by local Boards on an as-needed basis and are not intended to support ongoing programming. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the local Board prior to applying to confirm eligibility and review allowable expenditures. Programs seeking mini-grant funding should be participating in one of the quality initiatives listed on Page 3.*

## Wage Enhancements for the Early Childhood Workforce

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Designed to strengthen program stability and improve the quality of services by investing directly in the individuals who deliver critical support to communities. Wage enhancements are provided to eligible staff working in early learning programs that participate in recognized quality initiatives, ensuring that investments support high-impact services. These enhancements may include direct hourly wage increases, bonuses, professional development supplements, or funding positions intended to recognize the value of the workforce, reduce turnover, and promote long-term retention. These investments not only improve financial stability for workers but also elevate job satisfaction, contributing to a stronger, more committed workforce. By valuing the contributions of those who deliver essential community services, wage enhancement for the workforce fosters program continuity, quality improvement, and enhanced outcomes for the communities served. A wage enhancement should not be provided to an early learning program (i.e. child care or preschool) that is not officially associated with either the Iowa Department of Education or the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.

## Early Learning Enhancement and Expansion

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Designed to strengthen program stability and improve the quality of services by investing directly in the individuals who deliver critical support to communities. Wage enhancements are provided to eligible staff working in early learning programs that participate in recognized quality initiatives, ensuring that investments support high-impact services. These enhancements may include supplemental staffing funds that expand access to wrap around care beyond preschool hours and improve program quality by increasing staffing capacity. Child Care Businesses who do not have budgets to fully fund the staffing levels required to operate full-day, can use these funds to address the gap by adding staff capacity — enabling programs to serve more children, reduce ratios, and expand enrichment hours.

### Coordinated Intake (Community Partnerships for Facilitated Referrals)

Designed to streamline access to vital community resources and support services for households with children aged five and under, as well as expectant mothers and single fathers. Through dedicated funding and collaborative partnerships, this service provides a single point of entry where households can receive guided assistance in identifying and connecting with programs that address their specific needs, such as food, housing, medical care, mental health services, and more. The intake process begins with a comprehensive assessment to identify household needs and risk factors. From there, households are connected to appropriate community-based organizations, faith-based entities, and service providers that can deliver targeted support. This facilitated referral system strengthens pathways to essential services, ensuring that households are linked with long-term support options when necessary. Program effectiveness is measured by the number of households served, the range of referrals made, and the successful enrollment of households into ongoing support programs. Data is also gathered on the source of referrals, demonstrating strong community partnerships and trust in the intake process. Households participating in coordinated intake services report increased awareness of community resources, greater access to informal supports, and improved stability through concrete assistance. By simplifying access to critical services and strengthening community linkages, coordinated intake services enhance household resilience and well-being, creating stronger, more connected communities.