

## Community Plan Updates in SFY'23

### Name of Early Childhood Area: North Iowa Children's Alliance

Iowa Code chapter 256I requires that local ECIA boards report progress toward and achievement of desired results identified in the Community Plan.

Provide a narrative of the ECIA's progress in the last year towards the priorities and strategies identified in the most recent Community Plan. Success and/or challenges to meeting the ECIA goals may also be included.

The Board completed a community assessment and improvement plan during FY23. Through the collection and review of information, a complete picture of North Iowa Children's Alliance service area has been developed. This assessment has assisted the Board in identifying the following priority areas and strategies for the need to invest resources into services.

1. **Reduce and/or eliminate child abuse** Babies, toddlers and young children in NICA area will grow up with safe and nurturing family and caregiver relationships.
  - ❖ Provide quality care and education early in life.
  - ❖ Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development.
2. **Support for preventative health, mental health and wellness:** Babies, toddlers, young children and their families will have regular, ongoing access to high-quality health services.
  - ❖ Promote the use of dental sealants to prevent cavities.
  - ❖ Reduce obesity risk for children by focusing on nutrition and physical activity.
  - ❖ Improve strategies to connect families to mental health services.
3. **Childcare accessibility and quality care:** Quality child care should be accessible and inclusive to all families and children who want to access services.
  - ❖ Support the early childhood care and education infrastructure to ensure availability of adequate child care.
  - ❖ Promote and increase quality, health and safety practices through technical assistance and consultation services.
  - ❖ Provide professional development and consultation services to achieve and maintain performance at higher quality levels in Iowa Quality Rating System and IQ4K.
4. **Access to high quality early learning for being on track for school success:** All children should have access to early care and learning programs.
  - ❖ Expand access to preschool and other high-quality early childhood programs.
  - ❖ Increase funding for preschool scholarships for eligible families.
  - ❖ Transportation to and from quality preschool programs for those in rural and/or low-income areas.
5. **Safe, stable and nurturing families:** children grow confident, resilient and independent in safe, stable and nurturing families, schools and communities.
  - ❖ Provide evidence-based home visiting and parent education programs.
  - ❖ Promote referrals to and participation in home visitation services.

Describe how the board aligns their community plan with the [“We are ECI” Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#). Goals identified in the state plan include:

- **Infrastructure:** Promote a coordinated infrastructure to advance the early childhood system.
- **Communication:** Build public will for investing in young children and their families.
- **Workforce:** Transform the early childhood workforce through formal education, greater professionalism, increased skills and competence, and new approaches to implementing best practices.
- **Equitable Access:** Ensure that young children and families receive the services they need when they need them.
- **Quality:** Improve the quality of early childhood services for young children and their families across early care and education; health, mental health, and nutrition; and family support services.

The NICA board aligns their community plan with the state ECI by:

Infrastructure – working with other local organizations and agencies to not duplicate data collection and decision-making processes related to the early childhood system.

Communication – Through programming and our website the NICA Board communicates the value of the first 2000 days as the most critical stage of human life. This messaging is also part of our RFP application process.

Workforce – Local Early Childhood funding is allocated to improve the early childhood workforce professionalism and skill level through BIP programs and CCR&R consulting to achieve a high-quality rating.

Equitable Access - The NICA Board provides funding for transportation of children to Head Start programming where otherwise is not available. This is to improve access to quality Head Start programming.

Quality – The NICA Board only funds programs that are evidenced-based / science based. If a program is “promising” the Board encourages and provides funding towards the accreditation or process to become an evidenced-based program.