# SECTION 6: PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS, OUTCOMES & STRATEGIC PLAN

## MOVING THE LOCAL EARLY CARE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION SYSTEM FORWARD

The North Iowa Children's Alliance Board promotes collaboration with local community school districts, health system, community-based organizations, childcare systems and various early childhood services and /or agencies. First and foremost, ensuring there is no duplication of services created. Over the past 3-5 years there has been a focus on assuring the following programs and priorities were addressed:

❖ Childhood Immunizations
❖ Child Preventative Dental Services
❖ Child Abuse of 0–5-year-old
❖ Childhood Obesity
❖ Quality Child Cares / Preschools

This past framework or "road map" allowed NICA to achieve progress along the way. However, the indicators selected without priority areas limited program-wide strategic planning.

## SUPPORTING QUALITY PROGRAMS

The North Iowa Children's Alliance (NICA) has made great strides in supporting quality programs for children and families in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth counties. Most recently making the change to only fund programs that are evidence and/or scienced based with proven positive outcomes for the population they are targeting. The majority of programs that are funded are based on federally funded evidenced based programs. For example, NICA has traditionally funded transportation for Head Start programs in the area. Head Start is a federal funded evidenced based program that requires local match of funds to draw down federal funding. This was a natural partnership with NICA to assist a local organization in the provision of those match funds. Children 3-5 in our area now have access to a quality preschool experience for those under 100% of poverty.

As Board members we realize how important early childhood development is and that it has long term implications on our communities.

## Prioritization of Needs - Bringing it all together!

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.

## STRATEGIC PLAN – *North Iowa Children's Alliance Outcome Performance Measures*

There was a variety of community engagement in the process that led up to creating the strategic plan. Partners provided input, community needs assessment data, identified priorities of concern and how to move goals forward for the community at large. This process has allowed for opportunities for meaningful engagement of partners and stakeholders; all focused on designing a plan that is responsive to the needs and concerns of families with children 0-5.

The plan aims to provide children and families in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth counties with equitable access to resources, quality childcare and education and provide them with every opportunity for succeeding in school.

The following priorities, goals, strategies, and outcome performance measures have been identified by the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board that can best impact the priorities and consequently then impact the State of Iowa's overall results. (By Iowa Code, all ECI investments in programs and services are required to report data as defined by the ECI State Board. The following outcome performance measures correlate with our North Iowa Children's Alliance prioritization.)

PRIORITY #1: **Reduce and/or eliminate child abuse**

*Rationale: Child abuse prevention activities and programing are effective in supporting and strengthening families*

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | IDENTIFIED NICA OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | IDENTIFIED IOWA ECI OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Be an active partner in prevention collaborations, programming and educational opportunities. | Provide quality care and education early in life.<br><br>Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development. | ❖ % Of confirmed or founded child abuse | ❖ % Of participating families, the improve or maintain healthy family functioning, problem solving and communication<br>❖ % Of families that increase or maintain social supports<br>❖ % Of participating families that are connected to additional concrete supports<br>❖ % Of participating families that increase knowledge about child development and parenting<br>❖ % of participating families that improve nurturing and attachment between parent and child. | ❖ Child abuse victims % 5 years old or younger<br>❖ Child abuse and neglect 0-17 |

## PRIORITY #2 Childcare accessibility and quality care

*Rationale: Childcare environments directly benefit the healthy development of a child preparing them to do well in school.*

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | IDENTIFIED NICA OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | IDENTIFIED IOWA ECI OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Make affordable, assessable and high-quality early learning and child care available to all families. | Support the early childhood care and education infrastructure to ensure availability of adequate child care.<br><br>Promote and increase quality, health and safety practices through technical assistance and consultation services.<br><br>Provide professional development and consultation services to achieve and maintain performance at higher quality levels in Iowa Quality Rating System and IQ4K. | ❖ % Of childcare providers working towards level 1 IQ4K<br>❖ Rate of technical assistance contacts by Child Care Consultants in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth counties<br>❖ % Of childcare provider participating in quality improvement training<br>❖ % Of child care programs receiving Child Care Nurse Consultant services.<br>❖ % Of child care program improving in health and safety<br>❖ % Of children with special health needs identified with a care plan in place<br>❖ % Of workforce turnover rates at childcare centers | ❖ Cost per child for care<br>❖ % Of programs rating 3 or higher in the QRS system or rating 1 or higher in the IQ4K system<br>❖ % Of programs receiving CCNC services that improve health and safety conditions in their early learning environments<br>❖ % Of programs that increased or maintained the highest level in the QRS or IQ4K system | ❖ Programs meeting quality childcare setting standards (QRS will be changed to IQ4K)<br>❖ Average cost of childcare<br>❖ % Child Net registered child development home providers |

**PRIORITY #3 Support for preventative health, mental health and wellness**

*Rationale: Receiving preventative care and mental health services reduces the risk for disease and disability and provides an opportunity for referral to a specialist to reduce developmental delays.*

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | IDENTIFIED NICA OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | IDENTIFIED IOWA ECI OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enhance current community efforts in sustaining or improving preventative health, mental health and wellness for the benefit children 0-5 and their families. | Provide quality care and education early in life.<br><br>Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development.<br><br>Partner to enhance mental health services. | ❖ % Of child receive an oral health screening<br>❖ % Of children receiving any dental services<br>❖ % Of children fully immunized by 24 months<br>❖ % Of overweight children (>95%) in the WIC program | ❖ % Of children referred for dental treatment that went to a dentist<br>❖ % Of children who are cavity free<br>❖ % Of children referred and received follow up services/treatment<br>❖ % Of special needs health care plans in place | ❖ Rate of children immunized by age 2<br>❖ # Dental or oral health services for children 5 and under<br>❖ # Preventative dental services for children 5 and under |

## PRIORITY #4 Access to high quality early learning for being on track for school success

*Rationale: A high-quality preschool and early learning environment can help children succeed in their first years of school and reduce the early achievement gap.*

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | IDENTIFIED NICA OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | IDENTIFIED IOWA ECI OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Provide support for quality early care and learning environments. | Expanding access to preschool and other high-quality early childhood programs.<br><br>Increase funding for preschool scholarships for eligible families.<br><br>Transportation to and from quality preschool programs for those in rural and/or low-income areas.<br><br>The NICA Board believes that educating providers and families on the importance of quality childcare and quality preschool is vital. | ❖ % Of children demonstrating age-appropriate skills as assessed by a recognized assessment (e.g., Gold/Creative Curriculum).<br>❖ % Of kindergartners with a preschool experience<br>❖ % Of preschool scholarship recipients with an 85% attendance rate or higher<br>❖ Attendance rates of children participating in Early Head Start continuation.<br>❖ % Of children provided transportation to Head Start with >85% attendance rates<br>❖ % Of preschool programs rating 1 or higher in the IQ4K system | ❖ % Of children demonstrating age-appropriate skills as assessed by the ASQ-3<br>❖ % Of children demonstrating age-appropriate skills as assessed by the ASQ:SE<br>❖ % Of days children attended preschool and transportation provided<br>❖ % Of preschool scholarships awarded | ❖ # Of children aged 3-4 enrolled in preschool<br>❖ % Of preschools rating 1 or higher in IQ4K |

PRIORITY #5 **Safe, stable and nurturing families**

*Rationale: A safe, stable, nurturing home environment is imperative for healthy child development and a successful future.*

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | IDENTIFIED NICA OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | IDENTIFIED IOWA ECI OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children grow confident, resilient and independent in safe, stable and nurturing families, schools and communities. | Provide evidence-based home visiting and parent education programs.<br><br>Promoting referrals to and participation in home visitation services.<br><br><br>*The NICA Board believes that home visitation programming is the best use of resources and most effective means to parent education and support.* | ❖ % Of increase in prenatal clients served by home visitation programs<br>❖ % Of Medicaid/none insured deliveries<br>❖ % Of newborns tat test positive for substance abuse at birth<br>❖ % Of live births where the mother began prenatal care during the 1st trimester<br>❖ % Of confirmed or founded child abuse | ❖ % Of families participating in parent education opportunities<br>❖ % Of families with an increased awareness of ECI and early childhood services available to their child<br>❖ % Of participating families, the improve or maintain healthy family functioning, problem solving and communication<br>❖ % Of families that increase or maintain social supports<br>❖ % Of participating families that are connected to additional concrete supports<br>❖ % Of participating families that increase knowledge about child development and parenting<br>❖ % Of participating families that improve nurturing and attachment between parent and child. | ❖ % of low birthweight babies<br>❖ Rate of mothers with no prenatal care in the 1st trimester<br><br>Duplication of indicators specific to child abuse are also applicable here<br>❖ Child abuse victims % 5 years old or younger<br>❖ Child abuse and neglect 0-17 |