

**Early Childhood Iowa Local Area
Annual Report
State Fiscal Year 2013
July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013**

Name of Early Childhood Area: Early Childhood Iowa: Lakes Region

Website: www.ecilakesregion.com

Counties/Area Served: 1. Clay 3. O'Brien
2. Dickinson 4. Osceola

Current Board Chairperson: Name: Rich Mattison
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Assurances: I hereby affirm and certify that:

1. The information in this annual report is accurate, to the best of my knowledge.
2. The Board reviewed all indicator data, trends and analysis during this fiscal year.
3. The local ECI Board has conducted an annual review of the ECI Area Director contract with regards to state required performance measures.
4. The Community Plan was reviewed by the ECI Area Board on June 7, 2012.
5. This Annual Report was approved by ECI Area Board on September 5, 2013.

Signature of ECI Board Chairperson

Date

Signature of Current Fiscal Agent

Date

Rich Mattison

ECI Chairperson's Name (print or type)

Travis Edwards

Fiscal Agent (print or type)

Community Plan Updates

Name of Early Childhood Area: Early Childhood Iowa Lakes Region

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.

Priorities

- Strengthen the relationship between parents and their children through the provision of quality family support programs
- Improve health and wellness of infants
- Improve the quality of early care and learning environments

Progress towards the priorities and strategies including success and challenges

FY13 was a year of significant transitions for the ECI Lakes Region. The ECI Lakes Region Director, who had been with the organization since its inception as a Decategorization board in 1998, left the position in November, 2012. The .4FTE Program Services Coordinator served as interim director/co-director through the remainder of the fiscal year, with a new director hired in May, 2013.

ECI Lakes Region functioned as a combined ECI and DCAT board since 1999. Effective July 1, 2013 the boards separated into two entities. The boards continue to collaborate, and meetings are scheduled to follow one another.

FY13 was the first year of the Community Plan which was approved on June 7, 2012. For FY14 the Board authorized continued support for ECI Lakes Region's current programs utilizing the Plan's current indicators and priorities.

Although ECI Lakes Region operated with reduced staff positions for eight months in FY13, it continued to progress in its work toward the priorities of the Community Plan and was able to accomplish many of the Plan's specific strategies developed for the fiscal year. The strong collaborative relationships with other community organizations and agencies, as well as the strength, quality, and commitment of ECI Lakes Region funded programs, contributed to this.

Though not a complete list, examples of progress toward priorities and strategies include:

- A Parent Summit was held in May, 2013 after postponements from two earlier dates due to weather. Over 20 organizations serving families with children birth through age 5 were invited to participate in the planning and implementation of the first ECI Lakes Region Parent Summit. The Hand in Hand program of Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. served as lead. Nine organizations took an active role in planning. Two state and six community service providers and volunteers facilitated parent participation in a process to discover what services are most helpful for parents, how services could be improved, and what parents want service providers to know. 22 parents representing 18 families participated. Following the Parent Summit, the planning team met to compile participants' responses, themes, issues, and solutions/recommendations. The report was presented to the ECI Lakes Region board at its June meeting and will be used in the development of FY14 strategies and the next Community Plan. *(This activity supports the three Community Plan priorities.)*
- In FY13 ECI Lakes Region staff assumed responsibility for the coordination of the preschool tuition assistance program. 56 children were served, an increase of 32% from FY11 and of 49% from FY12. All children receiving preschool tuition assistance attended preschools that have achieved or are working toward quality standards. *(This service supports the priority of improving the quality of early care and learning environments.)*

- The ECI Lakes Region Board recognizes the importance of ensuring quality and consistent services across the four county area, and the Community Plan emphasizes continuous quality improvement of programs and services. The Prairie Lakes AEA 8 KIDS program, the first in the state to receive the Iowa Family Support (IFS) Credential, is working toward its recredential peer review which will occur in FY14. Following changes in the overall administration of the Best Care for Better Babies program in FY12, the program reenrolled in the IFS credentialing process in January, 2013 and is again working toward achieving the IFS Credential. Specific program data is contained elsewhere in this report. *(This supports the priorities of strengthening the relationship between parents and their children through the provision of quality family support programs and improving the health and wellness of infants.)*
- Based on review of data collected for the Community Plan and the needs and concerns of providers, it was decided to provide services to address the healthy emotional development of children in early care and learning environments. The Hand in Hand program provides early childhood social, emotional, and mental health related trainings along with on-site coaching, consultation, and mentoring to child development homes, child care centers, and preschools in the ECI Lakes Region. The focus of the Hand in Hand program is to support the improvement of social-emotional outcomes and the overall mental health of young children. All providers are contacted, and in FY13 48% of ECI Lakes Region registered providers participated in these enhanced services. *(This program addresses the priority of improving the quality of early care and learning environments.)*
- The ECI Lakes Region Board continues to support coordination of SEED (Social, Emotional, and Educational Development), a collaborative of early childhood programs and partnerships whose goal is to promote and enhance children's healthy social and emotional development. In addition to activities to meet SEED's goal, the collaborative will also play a key role in development and implementation of coordinated intake. *(This initiative blends all of the priorities of strengthening the relationship between parents and their children through the provision of quality family support programs; improving the health and wellness of infants; and improving the quality of early care and learning environments.)*
- As noted in last year's report, ECI Lakes Region recognizes that area demographics are changing rapidly. The Hispanic and Latino population is increasing, and we continue to work toward effectively reaching out to families and developing relationships and responsive services *with* them. There is a Hispanic/Latino family support worker serving the four counties. Of families receiving family support services in FY13, 10% were Hispanic or Latino and 5% were any race other than white alone (Census Bureau classifications). This reflects a higher percentage than in the general composition of the counties.

Summary

ECI Lakes Region is committed to a coordinated system of quality services and providers. The strong and sustained partnerships and collaborations built between and within ECI Lakes Region, area agencies, organizations, and schools, and communities are key to building systems to meet the complex needs of our families and children.