

STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
Health AND **Human**
SERVICES

Healthy Child Care Iowa Annual Report

November 2023 for Fiscal Year 2023

Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI) works to improve the quality of health and safety in Early Care and Education (ECE) programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-aged children and their families.

HCCI CHILD CARE NURSE CONSULTANTS (CCNCs) INCREASE QUALITY IN ECE PROGRAMS



HCCI is an evidence-based program that has been serving Iowa's early childhood environments (ECE); centers, preschools, child development homes and the families these programs serve, for 27 years. HCCI CCNCs receive comprehensive, specialized training for their role and are knowledgeable of the local areas where they serve and provide services to early childhood environments.

In Iowa, Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) are licensed registered nurses (RN) and are identified as Child Care Nurse Consultants (CCNCs). Child Care Health (Nurse) Consultants: Are health professionals with early childhood experience

- Have knowledge of child care practices, rules and regulations
- Integrate health into early learning systems
- Help programs understand infant and early childhood development and range of health topics
- Assess the health and safety needs of the early care and education program

Research has shown that high quality early care and education for young children improves physical and cognitive outcomes and can result in enhanced school readiness.¹ In FY 23, 56% of ECE programs in the state received CCNC services, which are voluntary services, provided at no charge to the ECE program. Across the state, ECE programs, directors and staff accomplish many of their health and safety goals by working with the CCNC. The CCNC builds trusted and collaborative relationships with ECE programs that provide supportive consultation, resources and referrals requested by the programs to help accomplish program goals. The local CCNCs receive support from state HCCI and each year the HCCI program continues to assist with improving the quality of health and safety in Iowa's early childhood environments.

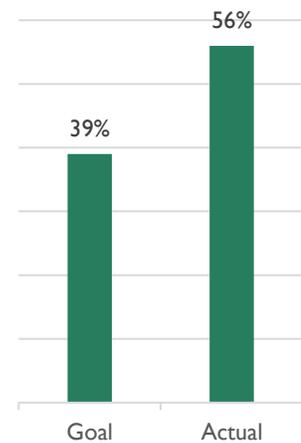
The HCCI program provides a strong health and safety foundation for ECE programs to continue to build upon. The collective knowledge and skills that the local CCNCs offer to programs and families, along with the application of health equity principles, make a positive impact for both the programs and the children and families they serve.

¹ Donoghue EA and AAP COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD. Quality Early Education and Child Care From Birth to Kindergarten. Pediatrics. 2017;140(2):e20171488. Retrieved from <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/2/e20171488>

CCNCs provide a variety of services and activities to help ensure that children have healthy and safe care. These services and activities include, but are not limited to:

- Onsite visits which may include; handwashing education, Health and Safety Checklist, Child Health Record Review and sanitation in ECE programs
- Health and safety consultations
- Training
- Technical assistance
- Information on health topics and referrals to partners such as Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), medical providers and many others
- Assistance with individualized care planning for children with special health needs

MCAH State Performance Measure SPM 3



MATERNAL CHILD ADOLESCENT HEALTH (MCAH) STATE PERFORMANCE MEASURE SPM 3

ECE provider participation with CCNCs is one of the state performance measures. This year 56% of Iowa’s HHS regulated, licensed and CCA providers utilized CCNC services. That achievement exceeded the HCCI goal of 39%. The number of providers participating with CCNCs has continued to grow every year for the last five years. Participation for ECE programs is defined as having received CCNC services with a signed Business Partnership Agreement (valid for 2 years) and documentation in the chart.

CCNC PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Child care program participation with CCNCs

- 2023 ECE programs

Number of child care visits completed by CCNCs

- 3,264 visits

Technical assistance provided by CCNCs

- 9,248 instances of technical assistance provided

Child care programs that improved health and safety in their environment

- 95% of programs improved health and safety
- 1,928 out of 2023 programs improved health and safety

IOWA'S QUALITY RATING SYSTEM - IQ4K®

CCNCs worked with ECE programs who are participating in the voluntary IQ4K® program or are in process of applying for a rating. These providers are HHS licensed child care centers and preschools, registered child development homes and programs operating under an accredited school district or nonpublic school. IQ4K® has a continuous quality improvement approach incorporating sections focused on health and safety as well as medication administration. CCNC services are a requirement for both homes and centers in IQ4K® beginning at Level 2.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY CCNCS

The number of special health care needs identified by CCNCs this fiscal year has more than tripled since FY21. Nationally, according to the HRSA Maternal Child Health Bureau NSCH Data Brief published June 2022, “in 2019-2020, nearly 1 in 5 children (19.4%) in the United States had a special health care need, representing 14.1 million children.” The brief also reported that “more than 1 in 4 households with children (28.6%) had at least one CYSHCN (Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs)” and indicated “CYSHCN are a diverse group who may experience varying degrees of health care needs and functional limitations.” In addition, “In 2019-2020, one in four CYSHCN (25.5%) experienced functional limitations either alone or in combination with some other health care need.”²

The increase in the number of identified special health care needs can be attributed to CCNCs that have built new relationships with ECE programs during FY22 and this year. CCNCs have built stronger relationships with providers over the last two years during the recent pandemic. These relationships that CCNCs built helped increase the number of visits and the number of providers participating with CCNCs during FY23. This has also helped to identify more children with special health care needs who are attending childcare.

CCNCs have the skills and expertise to help ECE providers and families obtain individualized special health needs care plans to implement while the children are attending ECE programs. The CCNCs help assist ECE providers with obtaining, reviewing and understanding the care plan. Children with special health care needs may also require medication administration while in child care or may need other specialized treatments. CCNCs provide services such as educational resources, training, knowledge of community and medical resources and provide referrals for children and their



² HRSA Maternal and Child Health, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs NSCH Data Brief | June 2022

families who may have needed additional support and services. These CCNC services help ensure a safe and healthy environment for children with special health care needs while in childcare.

Number of care plans in place	• 1,278
Percentage of care plans in place	• 95%

Types of Special Health Needs Identified (total: 1,424)

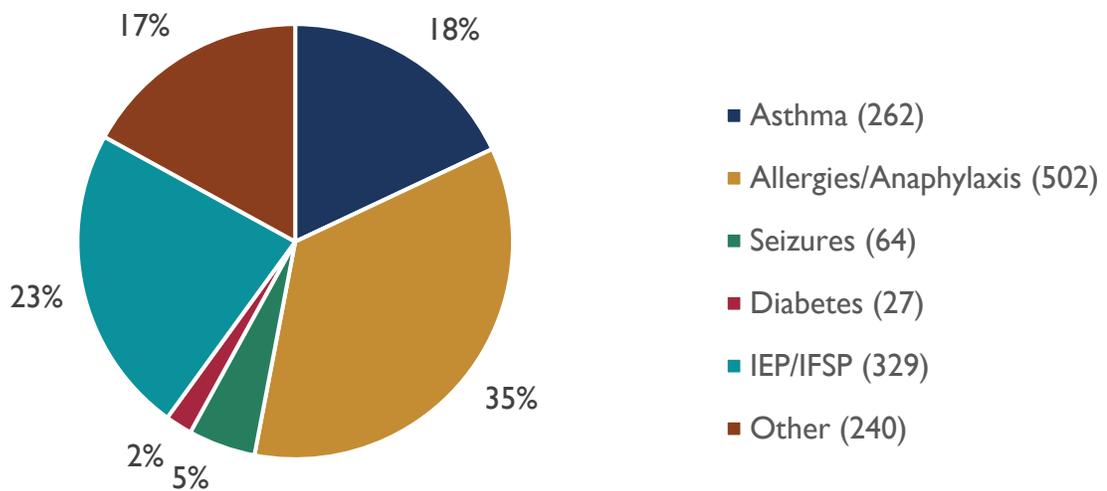


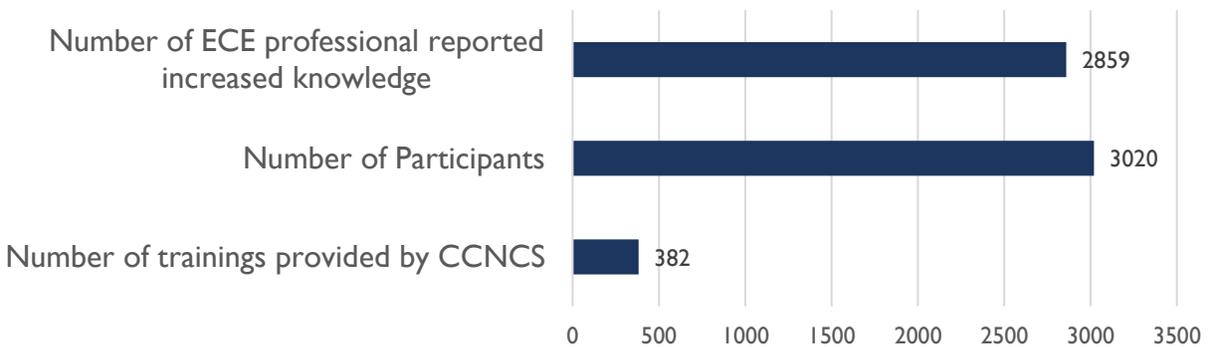
Figure 2: Children with Special Health Care Number Identified

Type of Special Health Condition	Number of Children Identified FY 23	Number of Children Identified FY 22
Asthma	262	138
Seizures	64	57
Diabetes	27	38
Allergies (including anaphylaxis)	502	243
IEP/IFSP	329	176
Other	240	175

CCNC TRAINING PERFORMANCE MEASURES

HCCI health and safety trainings are essential in helping ECE professionals gain needed knowledge to implement health and safety best practices in ECE programs. The knowledge gained helps the programs build a solid health and safety foundation. CCNCs held both face-to-face and virtual trainings to accommodate the needs of the ECE professionals. A variety of health and safety trainings took place on various topics such as safe sleep, special health needs, injury prevention and other health related topics. All CCNCs are approved CCR&R trainers and attend continuing education opportunities on early childhood topics. One important training provided by CCNCs is the Medication Administration Skills Competency training. Competency administering medications is a requirement for ECE providers applying for Level 2 or higher in IQ4K™. In FY23, CCNCs provided 122 medication administration skills competency trainings statewide with 1312 participants. This is well above the CCNC minimum training requirement to help ensure that ECE providers wanting this vital training had access to the training. Trainings increased by 143 this year and the number of participants from last year almost doubled. The percentage of those who reported increased knowledge from the HCCI approved trainings went up by 5% from 90% in FY 22 to 95% in FY 23.

HCCI Trainings Improve Participants Knowledge



382

• Number of trainings

2,859

• Number of ECE professionals reported increased knowledge

3,020

• Number of EE professionals attended trainings by CCNCs

95%

• Percent of ECE participants reported increased knowledge

CCNC SUCCESS FROM THE FIELD

There were many successes accomplished by the work that the local CCNCs provided to ECE programs, providers, and families.

One local CCNC shared a success story of an ECE program that was reluctant to provide services to a child who had recently been diagnosed with diabetes. The program reached out to the CCNC for assistance in understanding the needs of this child while in care. The local CCNC scheduled an onsite visit to the program and utilized educational resources to help ensure the child was able to receive individualized care needed while at the program. The CCNC made sure the program had a written care plan from the child's medical provider and reviewed it with the ECE program director, staff and child's mother.

After reviewing the plan and speaking with the staff and mother, the CCNC provided training to key staff about diabetes, including how to accurately draw up and administer insulin, understanding and monitoring the child for any signs of low or high blood sugar and what to do if the blood sugar was out of range. The CCNC made sure they all felt comfortable with the care plan and answered questions. The staff and mother were very thankful for the CCNC's assistance with the training, reviewing the care plan and the hands-on activity to make sure that everything was covered while the child attended the program.

Without having the local CCNC to help assist with this situation, the staff may not have understood all the necessary individualized medical measures for this child. The training helped avoid a potential medical emergency situation. This is just one of many examples of success that the local CCNCs help to achieve by providing the necessary and individualized supports that are needed and requested by ECE providers and families.

CCNC consultation, expertise, support and assistance to ECE providers and families is one of the key factors that helps improve health and safety for children while in an ECE program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information contact Healthy Child Care Iowa Program Health and Safety Analyst Kim Gonzales, RN, BSN, MBA, at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services: 515-321-4716 or kimberly.gonzales@idph.iowa.gov.