Project Update

Iowa Child Care Shared Services

BACKGROUND

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is implementing a multi-phase Shared Services project. This work is in response to the Governor's Child Care Task Force Report (November 2021).

The multi-phase Shared Services project includes:

▶ Funding providers' monthly child care management system (CCMS) software license fees for either brightwheel or Playground;

▶ Financial management coaching to help providers use data collected in the CCMS system to monitor and manage their programs;

▶ Technology grants to support providers' implementation of brightwheel or Playground;

▶ 'Data bridges' to connect CCMS data to KinderTrack (KT) and other data systems through Child Care Connect (C3); ;

▶ Online tools powered by data in C3 to help families find child care and child care programs fill vacancies faster and provide data-informed insights about child care services available in communities.

Launch of New Child Care Tools Powered by C3

In past Shared Services Project updates, information was shared about Iowa State University building and maintaining a secure, centralized operational data store (ODS).

The ODS moves specific data in and out of multiple sources. Iowa's operational data store is called **"Iowa Child Care Connect"** or **"C3."** C3 powers new online child care tools, a Child Care Search and Child Care Data Dashboards. Learn more about C3 click here.

Child Care Search

The Child Care Search is a new, easy-to-use online tool now available to help families find openings in child care programs based on their route to work or school. Filters can narrow down a search based on the ages of children needing care, whether the program is located in a home or child care center, accepts Child Care Assistance (CCA), participates in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) Program, etc. Use the Child Care Search on a mobile phone or computer to search for child care and see results.

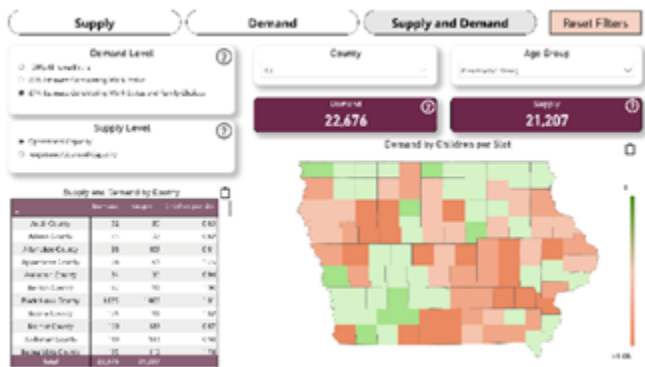 The green map pin indicates a child care program has openings.

Not just parents benefit from this new tool. Child care programs benefit from the Child Care Search because it is a free marketing tool to identify open child care slots in their program, potentially filling slots faster and increasing revenue. Employers and HR staff can use this new tool as a recruitment strategy with a potential employee to showcase available child care options in the community.

Learn more about the Child Care Search here and start your child care search here.

Child Care Data Dashboards

Understanding the current supply and demand for child care services is challenging when comprehensive data about available care, provider capacities, and family needs is not readily available. The launch of Iowa's new Child Care Data Dashboards delivers near real-time data with customizable filters to allows users to filter by child age group, program type, city, and county. Users are able to view the data on the number of child care slots

Screenshot of Child Care Data Dashboard

available in programs participating in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) Program or those accepting children on the Child Care Assistance (CCA) Program. A review of child care supply and demand regionally can be performed by selecting multiple counties and cities within a region. Data trends to aid with strategic planning is an additional resource available.

Learn more about the Child Care Data Dashboards here and start exploring the dashboards here.

For child care programs, join HHS on one of the dates and times below for a demo of the Child Care Search and Child Care Data Dashboards.

QR link to Child Care Data Dashboard

Monday, August 26th	1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 27th	6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, August 28th	1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
	6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday September 4th	1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

HHS will host additional presentations and demos of the Child Care Search and Child Care Data Dashboards this fall for organizations; local public, business, and economic leaders; schools; and other stakeholders interested in the child care industry. Watch your email inbox for announcements of demo dates and times.

Business Coaching Through CCCI Paired with State-funded CCMS License Subscriptions

Hundreds of Iowa child care programs, both small and large, child development homes and child care centers, have taken advantage of financial management coaching through the Child Care Collaborative of Iowa (CCCI) and state-funded CCMS license subscriptions for either Playground or brightwheel. Participating programs are also eligible for a technology grant to help support the implementation of either brightwheel or Playground.

Why is HHS pairing CCMS software with a financial management coach? The coach not only helps providers in learning to use the CCMS software, but also in analyzing the data in the system to improve business practices. The coach supports providers for a full year to identify and realize business goals around budgeting, cash flow, financial reporting, marketing, profitability, staff compensation, growth, debt, and other key metrics.

Connect with a financial management coach at CCCI here to learn more about this amazing opportunity. Staff will share a CCMS Selection tool and help schedule a demo with Playground and brightwheel to compare features offered in each CCMS product.

Extension of State-funded CCMS Licenses

HHS is extending state-funded monthly CCMS license subscriptions for brightwheel and Playground through June 30, 2025. A robust CCMS helps child care providers easily manage key business operations accurately and quickly like, enrollment tracking, invoicing, fee collection, family communication, HHS compliance, and more. Implementing a CCMS to support child care businesses is a gamechanger, whether it is a home-based provider caring for six (6) children or a child care center caring for 160

children. Contact the Child Care Collaborative of Iowa here to learn more.

Process for Additional CCMS Vendors to Connect to C3

HHS is developing an application and approval process for additional child care management system (CCMS) software vendors to connect to C3. Interested CCMS vendors should email sharedservicesproject@dhs.state.ia.us and ask to receive information and updates when HHS launches this new process. HHS anticipates this process will be posted on HHS's website in September.

NOTE: HHS is NOT funding additional CCMS vendors for provider license subscriptions or the vendor's costs associated with connecting to C3.

New Online Child Care Business Library

The Child Care Collaborative of Iowa launched a new online Business Library packed with a wide range of financial and business resources for the unique needs of child care providers and business administrators. The easy-to-use resources, guides, tools, and videos are available in both English and Spanish. Business topics fit in the following categories: business operations, attracting & retaining staff, finances, growth & sustainability, retirement, taxes, and federal & state funding.

To start exploring these helpful resources, simply visit the Business Library at https://midsioux.org/programs-services/children-and-families/ccci-library/

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