

# Family Support and Parent Education Tool FF

**Approved by the ECI State Board on January 9, 2026, effective July 1, 2026.**

On April 11, 2025, the ECI State Board approved a new funding formula. The funding formula for disbursing allocated state funds was established by the Early Childhood Iowa State Board. There is one 'overarching' formula for disbursing funds for program discretionary and home visitation. This accounts for the appropriated funds of school ready children (IAC 256I.9(e) and early childhood grant funds (IAC 256I.11(4)). Family support home visitation and family support group-based parent education services support the development of protective factors so families can become established in well-being and success.

## Funding Formula:

- 33% based on the number of children aged 0-5 living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level
- 33% based on the total number of children ages 0-5
- 34% based on the percentage of children aged 0-5 with three or more risk factors at birth (source: <https://iadatadrive.i2d2.iastate.edu/>) including:
  - Poverty
  - Low birth weight
  - Parenting alone (single parent)
  - Low maternal education
  - Inadequate prenatal care
  - Teen mother
  - Tobacco used during pregnancy
  - Preterm birth

## School Ready Allocation

Iowa law includes requirements for the use of School Ready (SR) funds in order to enhance current efforts to provide family support services and parent education programs for families with children.

Legislation specifically states:

256I.9 SCHOOL READY CHILDREN GRANT PROGRAM.

1. The state board shall develop and promote a school ready children grant program which shall provide for all of the following components:

3. A school ready children grant shall, to the extent possible, be used to support programs that meet quality standards identified by the state board. At a minimum, a grant shall be used to provide all of the following:

b. (1) Family support services and parent education programs promoted to parents of children from zero through age five. Family support services shall include but are not limited to home visitation and parent education. Of the state funding that an area board designates for family support programs, at least sixty percent shall be committed to programs with a home visitation component.

(2) It is the intent of the general assembly that priority for family support funding be given to programs using evidence-based or promising models for family support.

**Evidence-based/Promising Practice Priority:** In order to implement the legislative intent stated in sections 135.106 and 256I.9, that priority for family support program funding be given to programs using evidenced-based or promising models for home visitation, it is the intent of the general assembly that 90 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs. An innovative model is a family support program that has not been funded by the ECI area in the past. An innovative model will have one year in which to implement the program prior to beginning the process to meet the definition of an evidence-based or promising program. If a program chooses to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential that process allows programs to receive three years of technical assistance.

Each ECI area will be required to meet the target as defined above. The ECI Office will review each budget to ensure that the ECI area is meeting the target. The ECI Office will then confirm that the target is met during the review of each ECI Area's annual report.

For additional information on the state's priority home visitation models (eligible for IV-E match)

Parents as Teachers: <https://parentsasteachers.org/>

Healthy Families America: <https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/>

### **Use of Funds for Family Support and Parent Education:**

The funds used for family support services and parent education programs must be used to directly support individuals who function in the role of parents.

Sixty percent of state funds that the local board expends on family support programming must include a home visitation component.

Budgets must include adequate information to document if the program has a home visitation component.

## **Outcomes of Family Support Programs**

Family Support and Parent Education services promote the following outcomes

- ▶ Improve family functioning, problem-solving and communication.
- ▶ Increase social support for families
- ▶ Connect families to additional concrete supports
- ▶ Increase knowledge about child development and parenting
- ▶ Improve nurturing and attachment between parent and child

## **Types of Family Support Programs**

Family Support Programs are classified into three categories:

- ▶ ***Long Term Home Visitation:*** program is designed to provide weekly or at a minimum of twice monthly, home visits to participating families. Services are designed to be provided over a period of at least one year or longer. ECI strives to serve the families in communities with the greatest need. Therefore, it is expected that families will be scheduled to receive a minimum of biweekly home visits. As a family and their home visitor are preparing for discharge, programs using evidence-based models for home visitation may be reduced to according to the criteria established by each model. Higher frequency visits may be maintained if families have increased needs or stressors or have made limited progress towards stability and goal achievement.
- ▶ ***Short Term Home Visitation:*** program is designed to provide services to participating families for less than one year. Typically, short-term home visitation programs have a singular focus which includes assessments to determine referrals to long-term or intensive home visitation programs
- ▶ ***Group Based Parent Education:*** program is designed to provide standardized curricula in a group setting. A core function of a group-based parent education program is to facilitate peer support. Group-based parent education may last a minimum of six sessions or be provided throughout the year.

## **Additional Requirements**

***Operations Manual:*** The Iowa Home Visitation 2.0 Pilot participants are required to follow the policies and procedures listed in the IHV 2.0 Operations Manual. All ECI family support programs will follow all items in the operations manual by July 1, 2026.

***Electronic Data Collection (DAISEY Data System):*** All family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative are required to participate in the state administered internet-based data collection system, DAISEY. Programs are required to use the system as

intended and as the official data reporting system. Assessments and forms that are required are noted in the IHV DAISEY Data Dictionary. Assessment and forms that are optional are also noted in the Iowa Home Visiting 2.0 Data Dictionary.

<https://daiseyiowa.daiseysolutions.org/articles/iowa-data-dictionary/>

### **Staffing Requirement:**

Iowa Code and the Early Childhood Iowa State board require:

- ▶ Criminal and child abuse record checks be completed for all direct service family support professionals and supervisors of family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative
- ▶ Achieve the National Family Support Certification by the successful completion of the national family support certification exam. The national family support certification can only be awarded by the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals. Beginning January 1, 2022 all direct service family support professionals (FSP) must be certified if they were employed on or before January 1, 2021. Direct service FSPs that are hired after January 1, 2021 will have one year to earn their certification. Completed certification dates are to be entered in Daisey under staff profile. For more information on the national family support certification exam:  
<https://institutefsp.org/>
- ▶ Mandatory reporter training to be completed prior to direct service and supervision of work with families and must be kept current.
- ▶ Evidence based models must follow required trainings and staff qualifications

**Coordinated Intake:** Early Childhood Iowa Area boards shall require all family support programs in their community to register and maintain updated program information in the statewide coordinated intake system ([iafamilysupportnetwork.org](http://iafamilysupportnetwork.org)). If a local coordinated intake system is available, it shall link to the statewide system and funded programs will fully cooperate to ensure operational success. The purpose of the coordinated intake system is to ensure:

- Families are matched with the most appropriate service available
- Elimination of duplication
- Maximized referrals
- Outreach, promotion and awareness of family support services
- Coordination

### **Budget:**

- Evidence-based Home Visiting Models must be funded in a way that ensures the program may be implemented to fidelity. This includes time spent on the following: reflective supervision, outreach visits, engagement visits - including no show or drop by visits and continuous professional development opportunities.

Local programs should document all services provided as this could be reviewed in a site visit.

- Family support programs must plan for technology upgrades at regular intervals. Technology includes software, hardware and connectivity plans.
- Include costs associated with program operations in total program costs. Examples are:
  - Training
  - Supervision
  - Supplies
  - Technology, Data Collection and Documentation (may include mobile data collection device and data plans)
  - Program Promotion and Outreach
  - Service Brokering and Coordination
  - Report on other additional funding utilized to fulfill a home visiting model, beyond ECI funds. The reporting will be done in the mid-year and annual reporting tools provided by the ECI TA Team.

### Monthly Fiscal Tracking Spreadsheet:

Document expenditures on the monthly fiscal tracking spreadsheet to support family support services and parent education programs for families with children zero through age 5 years old.

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### Eligibility Criteria:

100% of the families enrolling in a long-term home visitation program during the course of the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) must meet one of the following criteria in addition to having a child between the ages of 0 through 5:

- ▶ Household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- ▶ Household has someone who is pregnant AND under age 21
- ▶ Household has a history of child abuse or neglect or has had interactions with child welfare services
- ▶ Household has a history of substance use or addiction or has a need for substance use treatment
- ▶ Someone in the household has attained low student achievement or has a child with low student achievement
- ▶ Household has a child with developmental delays or disabilities
- ▶ Household includes individuals who are serving or formerly served in the US armed forces.

Age eligibility is a child between the age of zero through age five. The age of zero includes the prenatal period. Programs are encouraged to focus on the prenatal through age three or preschool entry.

There are no eligibility criteria (other than having a child that is age eligible) for families enrolling in a group-based parent education program or a short-term home visitation program.

Eligibility may be self-declared at enrollment by the enrolling parent(s.) Third party verification of income or education is not necessary.

## **ECIA Annual Report – Performance Measures**

- ▶ Document through input, output, quality/efficiency and outcome data adopted by the Early Childhood Iowa State Board, the required performance measures of family support services and parent education programs.
- ▶ Input Measures:
  - Funds required to administer the program. Programs may include funding from all sources in this measure. If programs only report ECI funds then the other performance measures should reflect only the families that were served with ECI funds. Do not include in-kind donations in this report.
- ▶ Output Measures:
  - Number of Children (0 – 5) served during the fiscal year
  - Number of Families served during the fiscal year
  - Number of home visits completed during the fiscal year
  - Number of group-based parent education meetings attended
- ▶ Demographics on enrolled families:
  - Race of primary caregiver
  - Ethnicity of primary caregiver
  - Marital Status of primary caregiver
  - Educational attainment of primary caregiver
  - Household size
  - Household income
- ▶ Quality/Efficiency Measures:
  - Age-eligible children that are screened for developmental delays
  - Of those screened, the number that were referred to early intervention services
- ▶ Outcome Measures:
  - % of participating families that improve or maintain healthy family functioning, problem solving and communication –
  - % of participating families that increase or maintain social supports
  - % of participating families that are connected to additional concrete supports-
  - % of participating families that Increase knowledge about child development and parenting
  - % of participating families that improve nurturing and attachment between parent(s) and child(ren)

\*Please refer to the reporting instructions for more information on the performance measures.

Report all program funding sources and data to correspond with the total funding reported.

Failure to report annually the state required performance measures or comply with the guidance provided in Tool FF may jeopardize the Early Childhood Iowa Area's designation and may trigger the Early Childhood Iowa State Board to enact the Expenditures and Reporting Policy.

### Contractual Agreements with Programs:

The Early Childhood Area board will determine the contractual agreements at a local level with program providers. They may also require additional local performance measures to be reported.

### Suggested Minimum Program Elements to include in Contracts

- ▶ Planned Family Service Capacity – How many families will your program serve at any given time?
- ▶ Minimum Dosage – How many home visits will be provided? How many group parent education meetings will be offered?
- ▶ Direct Service Staffing Plan - How many direct service staff will you employ under this contract? What is their individual Full-time Equivalency (FTE)?
- ▶ Family Eligibility – Does the ECI Area have additional eligibility criteria? Examples: priority will be serving prenatal to age 3, the family support program must discharge the family when the child enters kindergarten.
- ▶ Curricula – What is the curricula the program will use? Please note this is different than a home visiting model. A family support program may use more than one curricula to meet the varied needs of the families they serve.
- ▶ Staff Vacancy Plan – How will the services be provided in the event there is a staff absence?
- ▶ Supervision Frequency and Availability – How often will the organization provide one on one supervision to each family support professional? How often will documentation be reviewed as part of supervision? How often will the supervisor observe the family support professional performing their work?
- ▶ Linguistic Needs of Participants – How will the contractor provide services to English Language Learners?