



COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS
FOR PROTECTING
CHILDREN IN
IOWA

2023

Protecting Children is Everyone's Responsibility

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



Community Partnerships for Protecting Children

Comm. 472 (07/23)



Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) is a community-based approach to child protection efforts, utilizing four strategies to support and improve the well-being of children and families in Iowa. The strategies include Shared Decision Making, Community Neighborhood Networking, Family and Youth Centered Engagement, and Policy and Practice Change.

OUR HISTORY

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) began as a national pilot in the 1990's. Iowa joined the pilot opportunity with the Cedar Rapids partnership in 1995. Today we have 40 CPPC sites to cover all of Iowa's communities. Several new policy and practice changes in Iowa have been promoted, piloted and implemented through Community Partnership efforts. Some efforts you may be familiar with are Family Team Decision-Making, Parent Partners, Parent Cafés and Youth Transition Decision-Making (YTDM). Trainings, professional development opportunities, and train-the-trainer programs have been developed and implemented to support improved practices and ensure quality and consistency across the state. State and regional networking, workshops and forums create on-going learning opportunities for our community of stakeholders.

OUR APPROACH

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) works with communities to prevent child abuse, neglect, re-abuse, safely decrease the number of out-of-home placements, and promote timely reunification when children are placed in foster care. Communities develop partnerships across collaborative networks to implement prevention strategies, provide early interventions, and share responsibility for the well-being and success of all children and families. The Community Partnership approach involves four key strategies which are implemented together to achieve desired results.

WE BELIEVE

- ▶ Families and youth are the experts in what they need to be successful.
- ▶ Children do best in families, and should be with their own families, whenever possible.
- ▶ Families are stronger when all members, including caregivers, are safe from abuse.
- ▶ Local communities benefit from shared decision-making among families, youth, and community partners to shape their own strategies in response to community needs.
- ▶ Integration of equitable and culturally responsive approaches to resources, programs, and supports is essential to meeting the needs of diverse families, youth, and communities.
- ▶ Supports and services should be linked and accessible in the communities in which families live.
- ▶ Parents, caregivers, and youth are vital to making local and statewide policy and practice changes to services and systems which impact them.
- ▶ Efforts to reduce abuse and neglect must be closely linked to broader community initiatives and priorities to strengthen protective factors and improve child/family well-being.
- ▶ Families and youth need supportive communities to authentically engage with them for healing, connection, and to offer a sense of belonging.

SHARED
DECISION-MAKING

COMMUNITY
NEIGHBORHOOD
NETWORKING

CHILDREN
FAMILY
COMMUNITY

POLICY AND
PRACTICE
CHANGE

FAMILY AND
YOUTH-CENTERED
ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY

Shared Decision-Making



Community Partnerships are founded on the principle of shared responsibility for the safety of children. Partnerships are guided by organized shared decision-making committees that include a wide range of community members from the following groups:

- ▶ Public and private child welfare and juvenile justice
- ▶ Parents and youth, including those with lived experience
- ▶ Education and early childhood
- ▶ Physical and mental health
- ▶ Domestic violence/intimate partner violence
- ▶ Substance use/misuse
- ▶ Volunteers, non-profit and faith-based
- ▶ Law enforcement and legal
- ▶ Local government
- ▶ Business and civic

Parents, youth, and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services are essential players in the collaborative work of local Partnerships.

These decision-making groups are engaged in assessing and responding to the needs of children and families in the community. This includes planning, implementing, and evaluating the strategies and activities of the local Partnership. The group is also responsible for educating their local community about the importance and community benefits of children's safety and well-being.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING IN ACTION

One local CPPC site identified refugee families resettling in the community were in need of car seats. A barrier to car seat education and installation events was the requirement for families to have their own car to participate. The Shared Decision-Making Team worked with car seat technicians to modify their policy, allowing one car to be utilized by multiple families for education on how to install a car seat. In collaboration with the CPPC and community agencies coordinating the event, interpreters and translated materials were also available for families in their preferred language.

PURPOSE

Provide leadership for collaborative efforts that promote community responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Recruit broad and diverse membership to set the direction and oversee implementation of the four strategies and local efforts
- ▶ Identify and assess community strengths as well as gaps in services and supports
- ▶ Develop plans and leverage resources to fill priority gaps
- ▶ Agree on measures, evaluate outcomes, and share accountability for outcomes

"I started attending Shared Decision-Making Team Meetings when I was 16. As a former foster care youth, it was so unbelievable to have my voice heard by all of the agencies that had worked with me and my family before. My favorite thing was helping to plan events and seeing how many more families with older kids came and enjoyed time together."

- CPPC Youth Member

STRATEGY

Community Neighborhood Networking



Community Neighborhood Networking focuses on engaging and educating partners and promoting community involvement to strengthen families and create safety nets for children. In addition, Partnerships build linkages and relationships among professionals and informal support systems. As Partnerships build, and as additional resources become available, Community Partnerships initiate more structured responses to address community-identified needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKING IN ACTION

CPPCs host community learning exchanges with community partners, colleagues and stakeholders to explore the historical context of race and child welfare and have courageous conversations about how the notion of race affects attitudes, beliefs, bias and behaviors. Race: The Power of an Illusion and Understanding Implicit Racial Bias learning exchanges hosted a total of 514 attendees across the state in SFY22.

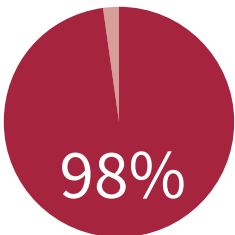
In SFY22, participating feedback through attendee evaluations of Race: the Power of an Illusion (RPI) and Understanding Implicit Racial Bias (UIRB) learning exchanges demonstrated these outcomes:

PURPOSE

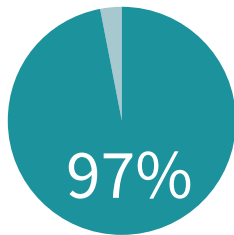
Promote cooperation and form alliances to provide more accessible and relevant informal and professional supports, services, and resources for families whose children are at risk of abuse and neglect.

ACTIVITIES

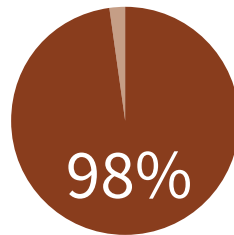
- ▶ Increase community awareness regarding resources and initiatives
- ▶ Marketing materials and newsletters
- ▶ Presentations and discussions
- ▶ Community events
- ▶ Establish and maintain multiple linkages and relationships among informal and professional supports and resources
- ▶ Multi-disciplinary cross trainings
- ▶ Ongoing opportunities for peer learning, information-sharing, and networking
- ▶ Joint planning efforts
- ▶ Community Resource Fairs
- ▶ Develop and implement community based responses



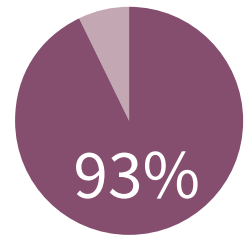
98% of the RPI participants strongly agree or agree they **know the definitions of disparity, disproportionality, equality and equity.**



97% of the RPI participants strongly agree or agree they **know ways to create more equitable outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.**



98% of UIRB participants strongly agree or agree they **know the definition of microaggression, implicit bias and explicit bias.**



93% of UIRB participants also report they agree or strongly agree they **can have a courageous conversation about race after participating in UIRB.**

STRATEGY

Family and Youth-Centered Engagement

Family and Youth-Centered Engagement focuses on genuine engagement of families and youth to identify strengths, resources, and supports that best meet needs for youth and families and their communities. Meaningful engagement centers family and youth in decision-making and involves a strengths-based approach to establishing and maintaining relationships and accomplishing change together. Engaging parents, caregivers and youth as key partners leads to effective solutions for both families and youth and for the community. Opportunities for co-creation and leadership of activities builds community connections, resilience, and healing for families and youth with lived experience in systems.

FAMILY AND YOUTH-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION

Cafés are a method of facilitating meaningful, reflective conversations that promote leadership and collaboration. The Parent Café model through Be Strong Families provides a safe opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn about and build protective factors, engage in relationship building and utilize their shared experiences to strengthen their families. CPPCs engage with parents, caregivers, and youth to participate in Cafés through leadership opportunities in the planning process, by hosting a Café and in gathering together to share experiences and build relationships with one another in their community.

"I have only been involved in our CPPC for a year, but think it is such a cool thing. I am starting to write scholarship applications, and always list my CPPC involvement as one of the top things I did during high school. Being involved has made me really think about what I want to do as a career. It is so interesting to see how a group of people that otherwise may never meet or talk, can come together and really work to make (our) county a better place for everyone."

- CPPC Youth Member

PURPOSE

Genuinely engage families and youth to identify strengths, resources, and supports to reduce barriers and help families and youth succeed.

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Promoting authentic family and youth engagement strategies
- ▶ Parent/Caregiver/Youth-centered Cafés
- ▶ Circles of Support
- ▶ Youth Transition Decision-Making/Dream Teams
- ▶ Bridging relationships with under-resourced communities
- ▶ Evidenced based programs which strengthening family and youth wellbeing and protective factors



**CPPC
networks
reported
hosting**

34 Parent Cafés
with approximately



400 attendees participating
in a locally held Parent Café.

STRATEGY



Policy and Practice Change

Ongoing evaluation of how well families and children are being served is important to achieving desired results. Communities must routinely assess their efforts, identify gaps and barriers and chart courses to improve policies and practices. Partnerships test innovative approaches, promote best practices and influence system changes to better serve families and protect children.

Parents and youth with real-life experiences within the child welfare system are key contributors to policy and practice change development. Involved community members, as well as families and youth directly impacted by the child welfare system, significantly changes the conversation about policies and practices related to child protection.

POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGE IN ACTION

A local CPPC site revised their grant application to be more inclusive for ethnic and culturally-based organizations to complete funding requests. As a result, the number of ethnic and culturally-based organizations awarded funding increased. The CPPC has continued to build relationships with diverse community organizations to build trust and partnerships.

Community Partnerships have promoted the implementation of the Iowa Parent Partner Program. Parent Partners is an approach that promotes innovative changes to celebrate individuals that overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability. Parent Partners use their skills to mentor families who are currently navigating through the child protection system. They demonstrate advocacy and effective communication while holding families accountable.

Parents who participated in the Iowa Parent Partner Program identified increases in the below Family Outcomes

SFY22 PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM FAMILY SELF-ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES	Average Increase in Score by Outcome
Access to community resources and concrete supports	24.50%
Social connections and access to supportive persons	29%
Ability to effectively communicate and advocate for self and family	33%
Confidence in managing stress and crisis	29.50%

PURPOSE

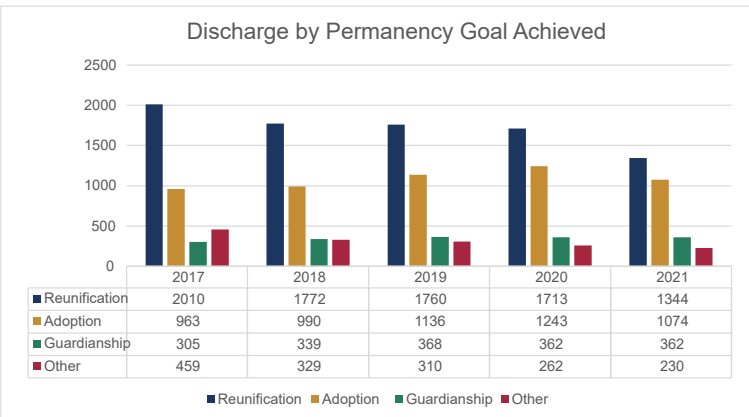
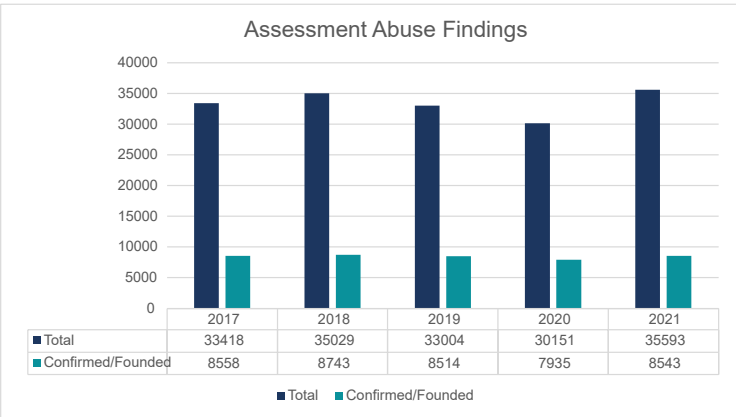
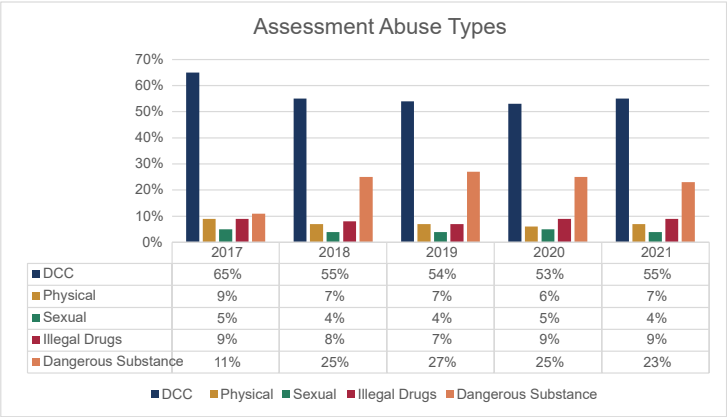
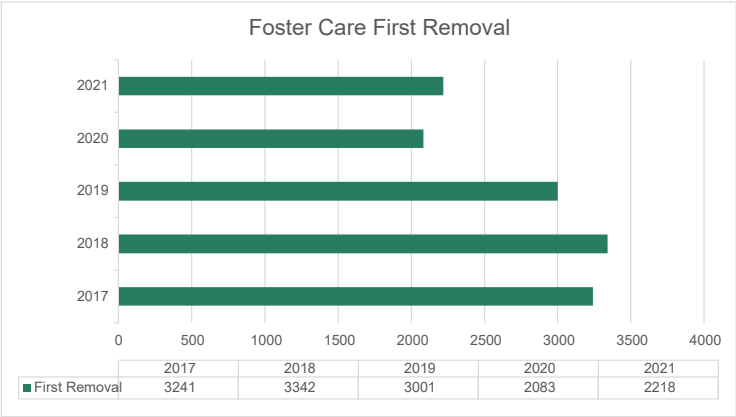
Improve policies and practices to reduce barriers and increase accessibility and relevance of services that lead to positive family and youth outcomes.

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Gather and utilize data and community insights to identify and assess needs for policy and practice change
- ▶ Explore opportunities to implement best practices
- ▶ Facilitate parent and youth input
- ▶ Implement and evaluate change within the context of the community

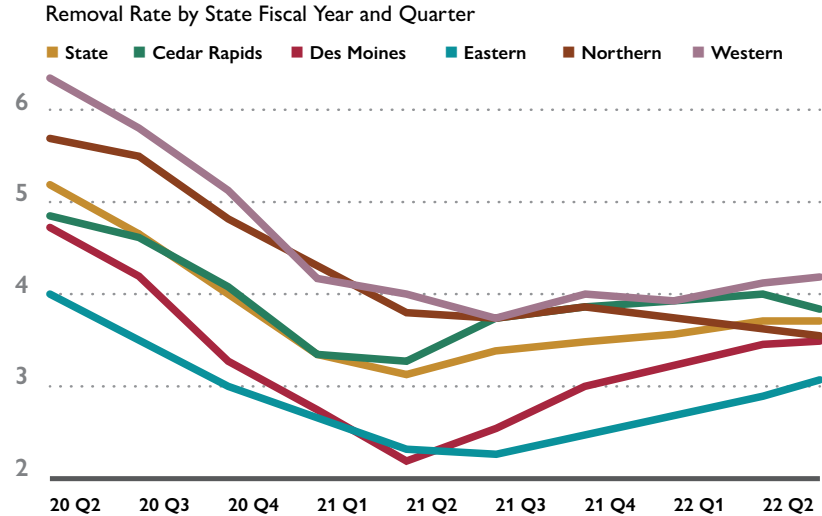
“It’s been a humbling experience to be able to make a difference in my community. To have a voice with my community when it comes to preventing abuse and protecting our children’s future. It’s something my nine-year-old self would be proud of.”
- Parent Partner

Long Term Collective Impact of Community Partnerships

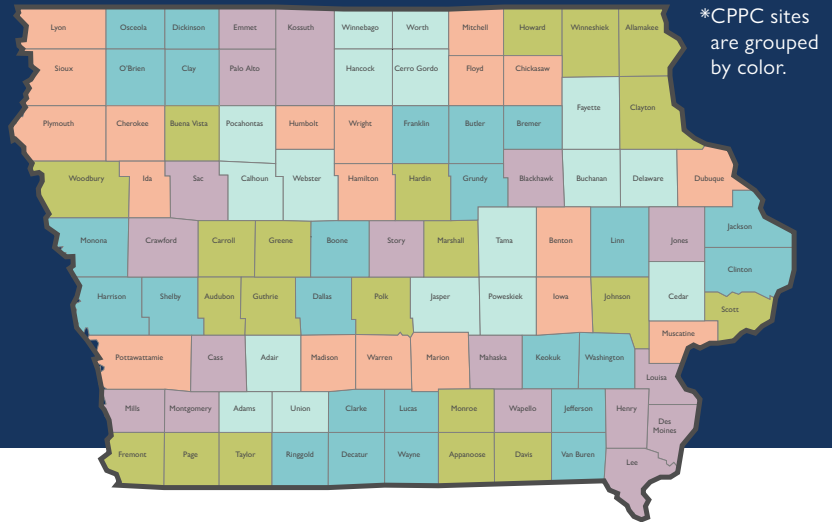


IMPROVING OUTCOMES A whole host of factors contribute to child well-being, permanence, and safety. Community Partnerships for Protecting Children are positioned to play an important role in continuing to improve these outcomes through the enhancement of community resources and implementation of the four strategies. These strategies are focused on changing child protection cultural response and improving child and family well-being and community safety nets by engaging communities, families, youth and agencies to work as partners in preventing children and families from entering the child protection system. The following charts are examples of outcomes that CPPC is committed to improving.

Removal Rates Per 1000 FY20 - 22



CPPC site locations in Iowa



*CPPC sites are grouped by color.

Milestones and Timeline

1995	Edna McConnell Clark Foundation provided funding for 4 national pilot sites including Cedar Rapids
2000	DHS hires state CPPC coordinator and Prevent Child Abuse Iowa begun host forums and events
2001	First statewide CPPC conference hosted by Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Edna McConnell Clark Foundation provided funding for 5 Iowa pilot sites
2002	Child Welfare Policy and Practice Groups provided Family Team Meeting (FTM) training & recruitment of Iowa FTM trainers
2003	Iowa's federal program improvement plan (PIP) and Better Results for Kids DHS redesign identified statewide rollout for FTM and CPPC State legislation allocates CPPC funding
2004	Prevent Child Abuse Iowa provided full time associate CPPC coordinator
2005	In partnership with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a full time position provided technical assistance/training
2007	CPPC implemented statewide and each Decat is allocated funding Prevent Child Abuse Iowa starts CPPC AmeriCorps program Parent Partners was implemented in 11 counties
2008	In partnership with Youth Policy Institute of Iowa, Transitioning Youth Initiative and Dream Teams are implemented in 9 counties Iowa's CPPC is highlighted in national publication by Andrew White First Parent Partner Summit was held
2009	Received Federal Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center (MCWIC) grant to expand Parent Partners statewide
2010	MCWIC began Parent Partner evaluation
2011	Partnered with ISU for full time Domestic Violence Liaison Parent Partner outcome database was developed and implemented
2012	Partnered with ISU for full time Transition Youth Specialist Standards and funding allocations were implemented for Transition Youth Decision-Making (Dream Teams) Parent Partners was operational in 68 counties and statewide contracting infrastructure was developed.
2015	Final phase of the statewide rollout of Parent Partners to be available in all 99 counties through a statewide contract.
2016	Connect and Protect (CAP) teams were formed in each service area to provide case consultation to child protection staff utilizing the Safe and Together Model of Practice™
2018	Partnered with ISU to hire statewide Cultural Equity Statewide Coordinator Rollout of Be Strong Parent Café model through expansion of Parent Café training opportunities
2019	Partnered with Marion, Madison, Warren County Decat/CPPC to expand and promote tools and resources for implementation of Parent Cafes.
2021	Continued expansion of Be Strong Families Café model through certification of Approved Parent Café Trainers in Iowa
2022	Rollout of the Family and Youth-Centered Engagement Strategy

The Iowa Departments of Public Health (IDPH) and Human Services (DHS) are becoming one, single, department. IDPH and DHS will fully transition into the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by July 1, 2023. Communities throughout Iowa share decision-making, facilitate policy and practice change, promote family and youth-centered engagement, and expand community networks to keep children safe from abuse and neglect and advance child and family well-being.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/child-welfare/CPCCfamilies>

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