



# 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative Annual Report

September 2022

## What is 1st Five?

**The 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative is a public-private partnership between the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and primary care providers in 88 Iowa counties.**

Since 2007, Iowa's 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative has supported the healthy cognitive, social, and emotional development of Iowa children from birth to age 5. 1st Five is a public-private partnership between the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and primary care providers in 88 counties across Iowa. Research shows that early detection of developmental delays improves short- and long-term outcomes for young children by using effective interventions that support healthy development. These improved outcomes reduce child developmental and behavioral problems, in turn benefitting our state's education, health, juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Researchers and those working in child health and development are clear that the sooner a child with emotional and developmental concerns receives early intervention services, the better the outcome. Consistent developmental screenings beginning soon after birth are crucial for the identification of developmental and/or social-emotional issues that impact a child's healthy development. The 1st Five Initiative helps increase the use of developmental screening by engaging with primary care providers to promote their use of developmental screening tools during well child health visits. This engagement and promotion are critical because only 34 percent of all Iowa children 9 to 35 months old were screened using a developmental screening tool in the past 12 months, according to the National Survey of Children's Health.

1st Five's integrated approach to young child health bolsters the healthy development of children in Iowa. Through 1st Five, Developmental Support Specialists (DSS) work with a child's caregiver to connect the child to interventions that address concerns identified during a developmental screening. A DSS may also refer families to additional resources for concerns that impact the child's development and well-being, such as inadequate housing, food insecurity and maternal mental health.

## What is screening?

Screening is a set of standard questions based on the child's age that help determine how kids are growing and developing. The screening includes questions and/or activities (like stacking blocks) that examine how a child plays, learns, speaks, behaves and moves.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2019 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query. Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Accessed at <https://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=8235&r=17>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, February 22). Developmental monitoring and screening. Retrieved August 25, 2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>.

## 1st Five's 4-part model assures a comprehensive approach to child health and well-being

1st Five utilizes a 4-part service model, where each part strengthens and reinforces the other to comprehensively identify, address and follow up on new or persistent developmental concerns identified by a primary care provider. Through this model, primary care providers are engaged and supported in implementing developmental screening and surveillance tools that result in early intervention services. The 1st Five model also ensures that families are involved in accessing services and primary care providers are informed of service outcomes.

### Part 1

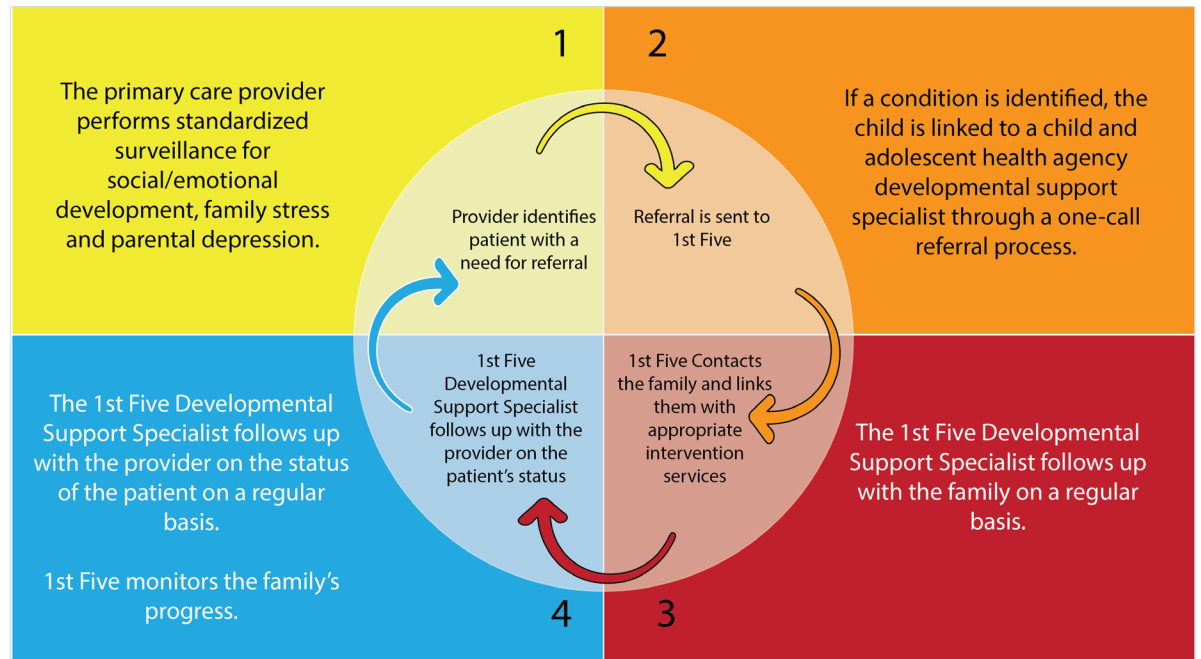
#### Provider identifies patient needing referral

1st Five Site Coordinators contact and build rapport with primary care providers to familiarize them with 1st Five services. 1st Five offers primary care providers training, education and tools to support implementation of developmental screening during well-child visits. Primary health providers receive ongoing education to address barriers they might encounter during implementation, including how to seamlessly integrate developmental screening into well child visits.

### Part 2

#### Referral is sent to 1st Five

Once the primary care provider identifies a developmental concern, they refer the child to their local 1st Five site, which support the caregiver to access early intervention services for the child. Primary care providers feel more confident identifying developmental delays, knowing that 1st Five is available to support the caregiver to access developmental support services. In FY 2022, 1st Five received 2,644 referrals from 700 primary care providers. Hearing, speech, parent and family stress, and resource needs were the top four concerns for which children were referred.



Source: 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative

98%

of participating caregivers said that they were mostly or completely satisfied with 1st Five.

98%

of participating caregivers said they would recommend 1st Five to a family member or friend.

90%

of participating caregivers said 1st Five made "a great deal" or "some" difference in their family's life.

### Part 3

#### 1st Five contacts the family and links them with appropriate intervention services

A 1st Five Development Support Specialist (DSS) works closely with the child’s caregiver to connect them with services and help them overcome obstacles, such as transportation or language barriers, that can keep the caregiver from successfully accessing services. The DSS may also identify and address additional needs not noted by the provider. In FY 2022, DSS identified an additional 5,374 diverse and complex needs beyond the original reason for referral for children and their caregivers. The DSS connected caregivers to various community resources, including child care assistance, food banks, housing support and transportation.

### Part 4

#### 1st Five Developmental Support Specialists follow up with the provider on the patient’s status

Once the child is referred to appropriate services, the DSS monitors progress to ensure the child and caregiver receive the needed services and follows up with the referring provider to inform them of the status of the services provided and the referral outcome. This feedback loop ensures providers have the information they need to support the child as they provide medical care.

#### By the numbers

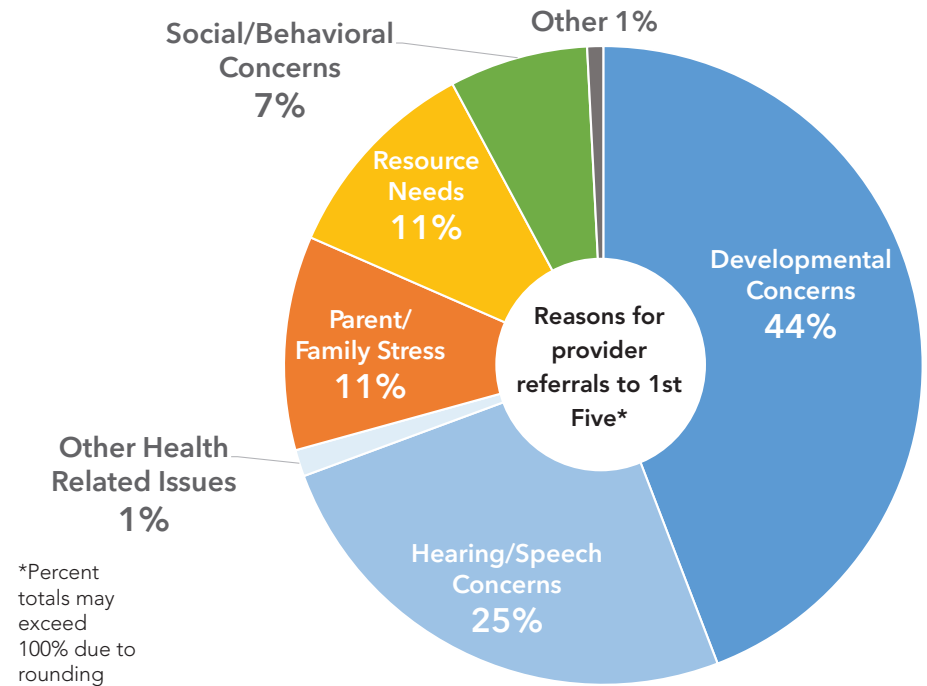
##### 1st Five’s legacy of supporting healthy development

- 1st Five served seven counties when it began in 2007. Currently it serves **88 of 99** Iowa counties.
- Over **29,000 children** have benefited from the early identification and intervention for social-emotional and developmental concerns before entering school.
- 1st Five has made **over 63,000 connections** to community resources that help caregivers address concerns related to their child’s development, stress, caregiver depression, and other environmental factors that can impair healthy development.

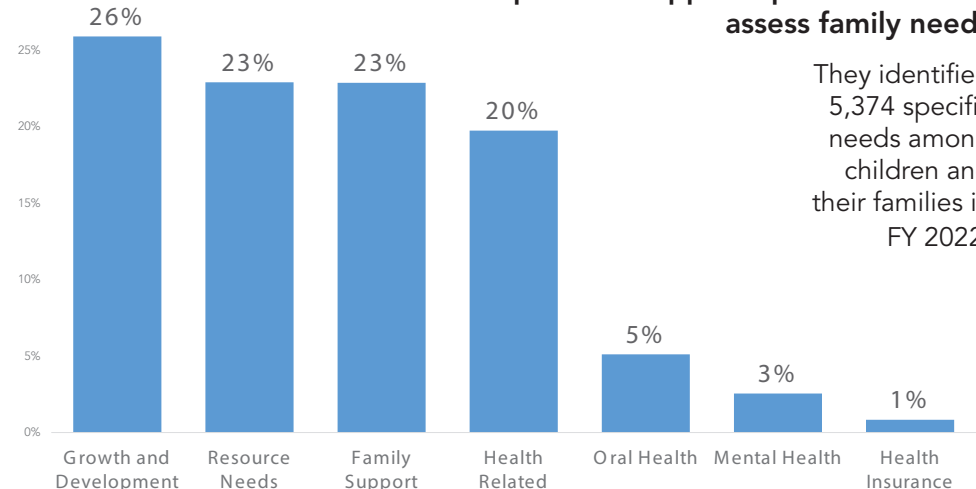
Currently, 1st Five is in all counties except Cherokee, Clinton, Ida, Iowa, Jackson, Johnson, Lyon, Plymouth, Scott, Sioux, and Woodbury

Providers refer children and their families to 1st Five based on a range of concerns related to development, health and social stressors.

In FY 2022, 2,613 records had referral reasons recorded from 700 providers.



#### After receiving referrals from primary care providers, 1st Five Developmental Support Specialists further assess family needs.



They identified 5,374 specific needs among children and their families in FY 2022.

## Meet Owen\*

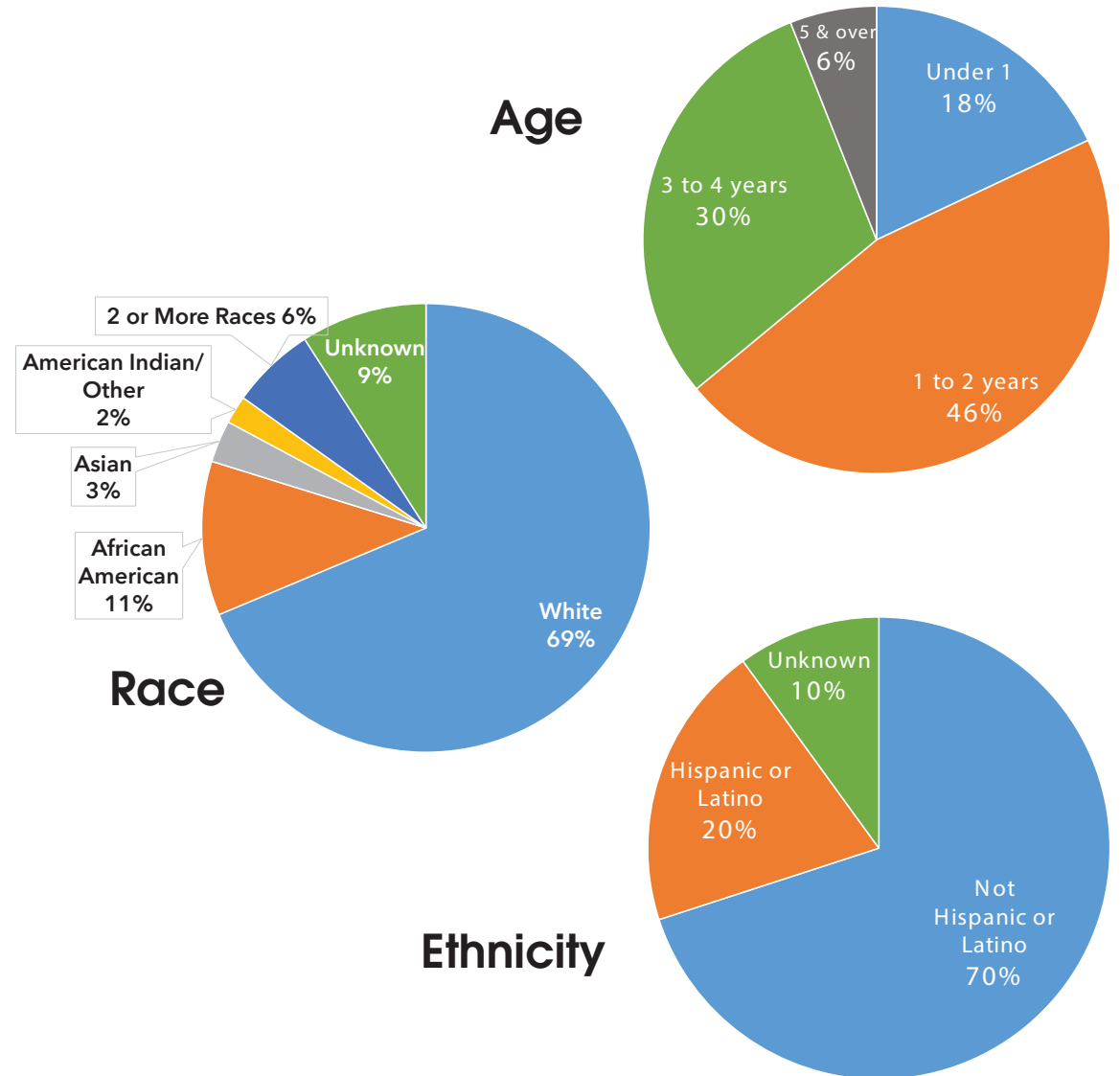
Owen's physician completed a developmental screening at his 9 month well child visit using the ASQ-3 developmental questionnaire. 1st Five had engaged Owen's physician and provided training on how to administer the ASQ-3. The ASQ-3 score indicated that Owen may have developmental delays in communication and gross motor skills. The physician immediately referred Owen to 1st Five. The 1st Five DSS connected with Owen's mom, Lucy, who also had concerns about Owen not sitting on his own. The DSS helped Lucy get connected to Early ACCESS, which administered a developmental evaluation that determined Owen was eligible for speech and physical therapy.

During phone conversations with her DSS, Lucy also shared that they were struggling to make ends meet. The DSS provided Lucy with information on WIC, the local food pantry, child-care assistance, and energy assistance. Lucy appreciated the financial resources and planned to apply for energy assistance in the fall. Lucy reports that Owen improved in the first few weeks of working with Early Access and is now beginning to sit and pull himself up independently. She is grateful for 1st Five's help connecting Owen with early intervention services. She is also looking forward to some financial relief now that they will receive food assistance.

\*Name has been changed to protect family privacy.

## About the children participating in 1st Five

(Percent totals may exceed 100% due to rounding)



This report is based on evaluation findings conducted by Common Good Iowa.

To learn more about 1st Five, contact Michelle Holst (Michelle.Holst@idph.iowa.gov) or visit [www.idph.iowa.gov](http://www.idph.iowa.gov)