

Linn County Early Childhood Iowa Board

Community Plan Priority and Indicator Data Updates- FY 19

Name of Early Childhood Area: LINN COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA

Iowa Code chapter 256I requires that local ECIA boards report progress toward and achievement of desired results identified in the Community Plan. Provide a narrative of the ECIA's progress in the last year towards the priorities and strategies identified in the most recent Community Plan. Success and/or challenges to meeting the ECIA goals may also be included.

Early Childhood Community Plan Priority Areas and ECI Board Efforts

Affordable and Accessible Quality Early Learning Environments for At-Risk Children

Community Indicators selected for this priority area:

- 1) Child Care Programs Listed with CCR&R (#): **Negative Trend**. 41.4% reduction in # of Linn Co programs listed with Child Care Resource & Referral from FY 13-18. In the same time period the State lost 42%. Loss was noted in all provider types but most deeply in child care homes.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** Fund the Paces to Quality program, which provides a menu of supports, training, networking and technical assistance to support child care homes and centers. Our CART program responds to child care provider requests for assistance in serving children with challenging behaviors through on-site TA and training. Linn County became one of the 30 communities working with Iowa Women's Foundation to host Child Care Solutions events. ECI staff joined the Catherine McAuley Refugee Child Care Business program partner meetings to stay current on and support this recruitment effort.
- 2) Centers Offer Evening/Weekend Care: **Negative Trend**. June 2019 data indicates there are still no licensed child care centers or preschools offering evening or weekend care. The only providers are registered or unregistered homes and they total only 36. Data suggests that families are utilizing Family, Friend and Neighbor care to meet their needs.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** Awarded funds to Paces to offer incentives to child care homes or centers that provide evening and weekend care. The Linn County ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that support or provide evening or weekend care. Linn County became one of the 30 communities working with Iowa Women's Foundation to host Child Care Solutions events. Met with and stay in communication with MedQuarter Executive Director re: their feasibility study for 24-7 care in Cedar Rapids.
- 3) Child Care Providers Serve Infants: **Neutral**. April 2019 data indicates 64% of child care providers self-report to Child Care Resource & Referral that they serve infants which is the same as prior year earlier. Although the majority of providers report they can serve infants, the overall number of child care homes and centers providing any type of care declined considerably.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** Linn County ECI funds full-day full-year year center-based infant care through our partnership with Early Head Start. The Linn County ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that support or provide infant care.
- 4) Child Care Providers accept DHS Child Care Assistance (CCA): **Negative Trend**. The percentage of Linn County providers accepting CCA increased from 2011-2014 and then declined thru 2018 to 72.4%. This is 3% lower than 1 year prior. Increased federal regulation on CCA was enacted in 2017.

- **Linn County ECI efforts:** The ECI-funded Paces program supported child care homes and centers with completion of the federal training requirements in FY 17-18 so they could remain eligible to receive CCA \$. For the FY 19 ECI bid cycle the Board emphasized enrollment in the Iowa QRS system, and reaching level 5, to help child care providers obtain the corresponding increased CCA reimbursement. The bid also included incentives to providers that enrolled families with CCA subsidy. No bidders selected that option but it will remain a Board priority.

Quality Improvement of Early Learning Environments

Community Indicators selected for this priority area:

- 1) Preschool Enrollment: **Positive Trend**. Linn County Kids Count data for 2009-2015 indicates a slow increase in the % of 3-4 yr old children enrolled in preschool. The data for 2016 is 54.2%, which is higher than the 2012 baseline of 52.8%. (Kids Count 2017 data is not yet available.) The Linn County rate is higher than the State enrollment rate of 48.1%. A new data source, Iowa Dept of Ed, indicates that for 2018-19, 70% of Kindergarten students, in all Linn Co public school districts, had parents who report they attended preschool at some time in the prior 12 months.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** In FY 19 Linn County ECI Board funds 93 slots of free care in licensed child care centers/preschools. In-home visitation program staff provides parents with information on enrolling child(ren) in quality affordable care. The CART program seeks to reduce preschool expulsion through on-site TA support of child care providers serving children with challenging behaviors.
- 2) Kindergarten Literacy/Reading Proficiency: **Negative Trend**. The FAST literacy assessment reported decline in proficiency from 2017/18 to 2018/19. Overall, 59.8% of kindergarteners in Linn County met the benchmark, a decline of almost 2 % from prior school year. The Cedar Rapids School District serves 44% of all kindergarteners and report 47% are proficient. The 2nd largest District, Linn Mar had 72% of kindergarteners as proficient.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** The Board funds free full-day full-year care in licensed child care centers/preschools. The Board promotes early identification of hearing, vision, dental and developmental needs through community screening events with the ECI-funded Health Alliance. Linn County ECI is the only provider of free preschool hearing screens.
- 3) Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) Participation: **Slight Positive Trend**. The overall participation rate of homes and centers in this rating system increased by 3% from 2016-2018 but is only 17.8%. The average state participation rate is 25%. The Linn County data indicates that 11% of centers and 7% of home providers are enrolled in QRS.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** The Paces to Quality and Child Care Nurse Consultant programs support child care provider enrollment in QRS through on-site TA, equipment grants and professional development. The FY 19 Linn Co ECI competitive bid increased its focus on QRS by awarding extra points (weighted) to applicants that help providers meet this state quality standards.
- 4) National Accreditation of Centers (NAEYC): **Neutral**. # of Linn County Co accredited centers (16) increased in 2017 for the 1st time since 2014. 13% of all accredited centers in Iowa are in Linn County (n = 16). Provider input indicates the increased cost and requirements of NAEYC may outweigh the benefits of obtaining the credential. The continued state emphasis on QRS, and not accreditation, may impact future participation.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts:** The Paces to Quality program provides general support to centers seeking or maintaining their NAEYC accreditation. The Linn County ECI competitive bid process changed its focus in FY 19 from NAEYC to QRS enrollment.

- 5) National Accreditation of Homes (NAFCC): **Neutral**. After years of no change Linn Co added 2 accredited homes in 2016 and then lost 2 in 2018. Linn County has 4 accredited homes which is 67% of all accredited homes in the State. The continued state emphasis on QRS, and not accreditation, may impact future participation.
- **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Paces to Quality program provides support and on-site TA to homes seeking or maintaining their NAFCC accreditation. The Linn County ECI competitive bid process changed its focus in FY 19 from NAFCC to QRS enrollment.

Quality Family Support and Parent Education for At-Risk Families

Community Indicators selected for this priority area:

- 1) Confirmed Child Abuse (0-5 yrs): **Negative Trend**. The total # of abuse cases of children under age 6 increased from 2015-2018 (+102). Of all child abuse cases (age 0-17 years) the majority, or 52.2%, continues to be children < age 5. This is less than 2017 but exceeds the state average of 47%.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Board funds three (3) in-home visitation and two (2) group based parent education programs. The Linn County FY 19 ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that focus on Family Stability.
- 2) Child (under age 17) Living below Poverty: **Positive Trend**. At 11.1%, Linn Co children in poverty is at its lowest since 2013 baseline and lower than the State (14.6%). Of interest though is the United Way ALICE Report, which indicates that an additional 31% of families in Linn Co are over the federal poverty level and financially struggling.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Board funds in-home visitation programs that assist families with credit counseling & budget classes and links to other resources. 75% of the childcare slots funded by ECI are full-day & year which allows parents to work or obtain training/school in pursuit of stable employment. The Linn County FY 19 ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that focus on Family Stability.
- 3) High Quality Parent Ed and Family Support Programs: **Positive Trend**. Since 2014 the majority (80%) of Linn County ECI programs are deemed Evidence Based (EB) or Promising Practice (PP). In FY 19 the Board ceased funding the 1 program that did not meet EB or PP and awarded \$ to a new vendor. This new vendor enrolled in Iowa Family Support Credential and is the middle of year 1 of 3 year process. Thus our Board remains at 80% but is on track for 100% in FY 22.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Board provides financial support for family support and parent ed staff to obtain the Family Support Credential. The TIES program was awarded funds to conduct their Evidence-Based evaluation visit from the RIP program located in Nashville TN. ECI contracts include language requiring programs obtain and maintain EB or PP standard.
- 4) Maternal Depression: **Negative Trend**. In 2013 40% of Linn Co Single mothers report 11-15 days of poor mental health per month (BRFSS = Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System). In 2016 the data point was updated. 40.9% of Linn Co Single mothers report 25-30 days of Poor Mental Health in a given month.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Linn County FY 19 ECI competitive bid process awarded extra points (weighted) to applicants that incentivize or directly support at-risk families to attend Maternal Mental Health appointments. The TIES program collects pre-post Parental Stress Index data to monitor change in parent stress as a result of the training modules. The In-Home visitation programs uses the Edinburgh Postnatal Maternal Depression Screening tool and make referrals as applicable.

Preventative Child Health Services for At-Risk Families

Community Indicators selected for this priority area:

- 1) Children on Medicaid that Received Dental Services: **Negative Trend**. In June 2019, 59.5% of Linn Co Medicaid-enrolled children received any dental services, which is a 3% decrease from prior year. 2017 data was the lowest % since the baseline in 2009. From June 2013-2015 the % remained at or above 65% but has been below that % ever since.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: Since FY 07 Linn County ECI has funded oral health screens, fluoride varnishes and vouchers for treatment. All ECI direct service programs are required to report the % of children they serve that received a dental screening. The Linn County ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that support early identification of dental needs in underserved populations.
- 2) Prenatal Care in 1st Tri: **Positive Trend**. 2009-2017 data indicates the majority of women in Linn County report having prenatal care in 1st trimester. The 2017 figure (84.3%) is higher than the prior year and exceeds the state data of 79.1%. This data should be reviewed again when more current info is released and include prenatal care rates by race/ethnicity.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Linn County ECI competitive bid process awards extra points (weighted) to applicants that reduce barriers to pregnant women can fully participate in health screens and care coordination. Since FY 18 the Board funds 1st Five, which partners with physician's office to connect mothers with identified needs to local supports.
- 3) Low Birth Weight: **Positive Trend**. The % of low birth weight babies in Linn County declined again for 3rd year. Linn County rate (6.4%) is on par with the State rate (6.6%). The rates of low-birth weight in Iowa range from 4.4% to 8.7%.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: The Board issued a competitive bid to support preventive health services for at-risk families and since FY 18 has funded 1st Five, which partners with physician's office to connect pregnant women/mothers with identified needs to local supports.
- 4) Adults with 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): **Trend to Watch**. The Iowa ACE's research data (2014) states that 11.9% of Linn County adults surveyed had four or more ACE's. The state-wide data indicates 14.5% of adults have four or more ACE's. County level data for ACE's is not available for 2016 but the state % is 16%. In Linn County the 2013-2016 BRFSS data indicates an increase in the % of single mothers reporting a high number of poor mental health days per month.
 - **Linn County ECI efforts**: Local trainings on ACE's are shared with all ECI-funded providers. ECI Director serves on local planning committee to increase community and agency awareness of trauma informed care.