

Every Child Counts seeks to influence policies affecting Iowa children and families on issues related to early learning and development, child health and well-being and family economic success. Each year, ECC develops a legislative agenda and set of policy priorities. ECC also responds throughout the year to additional policy issues as they arise. The following are specific policy priorities ECC, with research and communication support from CFPC, will promote in 2014.

Quality Early Learning and Development

- Support Early Childhood Iowa's comprehensive early-childhood systems-building strategies at the state and community levels (including restoring funding for ECI to 2008 level).
- Strengthen the availability of evidence-based preschool programs for low-income children and support targeted outreach efforts to increase their participation.
- Promote additional policies (including addressing chronic elementary absenteeism) to increase the proportion of Iowa children reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

Child Health and Well-Being

- Continue to develop and expand programs, practices and systems that improve healthy development and children's mental health, drawing on current exemplary work on 1st Five, Project LAUNCH and ACEs.
- Expand access to child nutrition programs for school-aged children.
- Improve child safety and well-being through youth, family and community involvement in child safety, permanence and well-being efforts.

Family Economic Success

- Increase access to affordable and quality child care through the state child care assistance program (raising the eligibility level for working families to 155 percent of the federal poverty level, increasing provider reimbursement rates to the 2008 market rate, and extending the eligibility reapplication time from 6 to 12 months).