



Early Childhood Iowa: A Proven Local Solutions System for Iowa's Children and Families

2025 Legislative Priorities

1. Sustain and Strengthen Early Childhood Iowa as Iowa's Local Early Childhood System

ECI is a trusted, community-driven system that supports the healthy development of children from birth through age five. ECI empowers local decision-making to address the unique needs of children and families across Iowa, focusing on:

- Primary prevention and early intervention
- Strengthening families
- Enhancing early learning environments

By investing in the earliest years, ECI ensures children enter school ready to learn and grow into a skilled, productive workforce. With a long-standing history of collaboration and community partnerships, ECI delivers effective, locally tailored solutions that improve outcomes for young children and their families.

We urge continued legislative support for Early Childhood Iowa as a proven, effective system that builds strong foundations for Iowa's future.

2. Request \$1.15 Million Increase to ECI Area Boards through the Early Childhood Iowa fund

In SFY 2008, the statewide ECI system received \$45.7 million. Since then, funding has declined and stagnated, with the SFY 2026 allocation at \$27.9 million—a 40% reduction since 2008. Adjusted for inflation, restoring ECI to 2008 levels would require over \$66 million today. Increased funding of \$1.15 million (a 5% increase) would bring ECI funding to \$29.05 million in SFY 2026.

Funding erosion since 2008 has resulted in:

- Reduced services and supports for children and families
- Limited capacity for local innovation and responsiveness
- Strained early childhood infrastructure, including childcare

The Association respectfully requests a \$1.15 million increase to the Early Childhood Iowa Fund, to directly support local ECI Area Boards. This increased investment will allow communities to serve more children and families with high-quality early childhood services. Invest in Iowa's future workforce by prioritizing early childhood development and family support.

Your support ensures every Iowa child can thrive—starting at birth.