



## Early Childhood Iowa School Ready Funds Family Support & Parent Education Tool FF

### School Ready Allocation

Iowa law includes requirements for the use of School Ready (SR) funds in order to enhance current efforts to provide family support services and parent education programs for families with children.

Legislation specifically states:

256I.9 SCHOOL READY CHILDREN GRANT PROGRAM.

1. The state board shall develop and promote a school ready children grant program which shall provide for all of the following components:

3. A school ready children grant shall, to the extent possible, be used to support programs that meet quality standards identified by the state board. At a minimum, a grant shall be used to provide all of the following:

b. (1) Family support services and parent education programs promoted to parents of children from zero through age five. Family support services shall include but are not limited to home visitation. Of the state funding that an area board designates for family support programs, at least sixty percent shall be committed to programs with a home visitation component.

(2) It is the intent of the general assembly that priority for home visitation program funding be given to programs using evidence-based or promising models for home visitation.

SF 2321 enrolled: 12. EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA FUND — FAMILY SUPPORT AND PARENT EDUCATION

The amount appropriated in this subsection shall be used for family support services and parent education programs targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five and shall be distributed using the distribution formula approved by the early childhood Iowa state board and shall be used by an early childhood Iowa area board only for family support services and parent education programs targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through age five.

### Definitions:

**“Evidence-based program”** means a program that is based on scientific evidence demonstrating that the program model is effective. An evidence-based program shall be reviewed onsite and compared to program model standards by the model developer or the developer’s designee at least every five years to ensure that the program continues to maintain fidelity with the program model. The program model shall have had demonstrated significant and sustained positive outcomes in an evaluation utilizing a well-designed and rigorous randomized controlled research design or a quasi-experimental research design, and the evaluation results shall have been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**“Family support programs”** includes group-based parent education or home visiting programs that are designed to strengthen protective factors, including parenting skills, increasing parental knowledge of child development, and increasing family functioning and problem solving skills. A family support program may be used as an early intervention strategy to improve birth outcomes, parental knowledge, family economic success, the home learning environment, family and child involvement with others, and coordination with other community resources. A family support program may have a specific focus on preventing child maltreatment or ensuring children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school.

**“Home visitation”** is a strategy to deliver family support or parent education services. A home visit is a face-to-face visit with a family in their home, or other alternate location, to facilitate meeting the family’s goals. Temporary use of an alternate location may happen when meeting in the family home presents safety concerns for the worker or the family or on rare occasions to facilitate meeting the program’s outcomes such as medical appointments or school staffing. Home Visits are calculated based on the number of times you meet with the family. They are NOT multiplied by the number of children present.

A **“home visitation component”** is defined as a family support service that uses home visitation as the primary method for service delivery. Home visits are provided at regular intervals throughout the entire fiscal year and meets the definition of home visitation provided in this guidance.

**“Parent education”** programs implement organized and planned meetings designed to support parents’ efforts to enhance their children’s health and development.

Parent education programs have the following characteristics:

- Provides parents’ with information, skills, support systems and confidence in their parental role in order to support, nurture and promote children’s health and development;
- Strengthens positive relationships between parent and children;
- Builds on parents’ strengths and utilizes their experiences, ideas and knowledge;
- Provides information that meets the needs of parents for specific content and shared in a manner that is responsive to parents’ learning style, education and culture.

NOTE: Parent education may be provided in a group setting or one on one in a family’s home or alternate location. Refer to the definition of home visitation for additional information about the use of an alternate location. Parent education is limited in scope and duration, lasting a minimum of six weeks and utilizes standardized curricula. One day, stand alone events such as a child fair, are not eligible for funding with this funding stream.

**“Promising program”** means a program that meets all of the following requirements:

- (a) The program conforms to a clear, consistent family support model that has been in existence for at least three years.
- (b) The program is grounded in relevant empirically-based knowledge.
- (c) The program is linked to program-determined outcomes.
- (d) The program is associated with a national or state organization that either has comprehensive program standards that ensure high-quality service delivery and continuous program quality improvement or the program model has demonstrated through the program’s benchmark outcomes that the program has achieved significant positive outcomes equivalent to those achieved by program models with published significant and sustained results in a peer-reviewed journal.
- (e) The program has been awarded the Iowa family support credential and has been reviewed onsite at least every five years to ensure the program’s adherence to the Iowa family support standards approved by the early childhood Iowa state board created in section 256I.3 or a comparable set of standards. The onsite review is completed by an independent review team that is not associated with the program or the organization administering the program.

**Outcomes of Family Support and Parent Education:**

Family Support and Parent Education services promote the following outcomes:

1. Improve family functioning, problem solving and communication
2. Increase social support for families
3. Connect families to additional concrete supports

4. Increase knowledge about child development and parenting
5. Improve nurturing and attachment between parent and child

**Types of Family Support Programs:**

Family support programs are classified into four categories:

- Intensive Home Visitation – program is designed to provide weekly or more frequent, home visits to participating families. Services are designed to be provided over a period of at least one year or longer.
- Long-term Home Visitation – program is designed to provide at least a monthly home visit to participating families. Services are designed to be provided over a period of one year or longer.
- Short-term Home Visitation – program is designed to provide services to participating families for less than one year. Typically short-term home visitation programs have a singular focus which may include assessment to determine referrals to long-term or intensive home visitation programs.
- Group-based parent education – program is designed to provide a standardized curricula in a group setting. A core function of a group-based parent education program is to facilitate peer support. Group-based parent education may last a minimum of six sessions or be provided through-out the year.

**Required Timelines:**

Staffing Requirement: Effective January 1, 2013, the state board requires criminal and child abuse record checks be completed for all direct service workers and supervisors of family support programs funded through the early childhood Iowa initiative.

Electronic Data Collection: All family support programs funded through the ECI area board are required to participate in the state administered internet-based data collection system, REDCap beginning July 1, 2013.

Coordinated Intake: Early Childhood Iowa Area boards shall require all family support programs in their community to participate in the implementation of a coordinated intake process by July 1, 2015. The purpose of the coordinated intake process is to ensure:

- Families are matched with the most appropriate service available
- Eliminates duplication
- Maximizes referrals
- Ensures coordination

Evidence-based/Promising Practice Priority: In order to implement the legislative intent stated in sections 135.106 and 256I.9, that priority for home visitation program funding be given to programs using evidenced-based or promising models for home visitation, it is the intent of the general assembly to phase-in the funding priority as follows:

- 1) By July 1, 2013, 25 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 2) (2) By July 1, 2014, 50 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidenced-based or promising program models.
- 3) (3) By July 1, 2015, 75 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 4) (4) By July 1, 2016, 90 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10 percent of funds may be used

for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

Each ECI area will be required to meet the targets as defined above. The ECI Office will review each budget to ensure that the ECI area is planning to meet the respective targets. The ECI Office will then confirm that the targets are met during their review of each ECI Area's annual report.

**Use of Funds for Family Support and Parent Education:**

The school ready funds designated for family support services and parent education programs must be used to directly support individuals who function in the role of parents.

Early Childhood Iowa Area boards shall fund programs that adhere to the Iowa Family Support Standards or comparable state or national standards in order to make the best investment possible with public funds.

Sixty percent of state funds that the local board expends on family support programming must include a home visitation component.

Budgets must include adequate information to document if the program has a home visitation component.

Include costs associated with program operations in total program costs. Examples are:

- Training
- Supervision
- Supplies
- Data Collection and Documentation (may include mobile data collection device and data plans)
- Program Promotion and Outreach
- Service Brokering and Coordination

**Eligibility Criteria:**

75% of the families enrolling in a long-term or intensive home visitation program during the course of the fiscal year must meet one of the following criteria in addition to having a child between the ages of 0 through 5:

- Have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level
- Have a parent that has achieved a high school diploma or less education
- Have a child that has a current Iowa Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

There is no eligibility criteria (other than having a child that is age eligible) for families enrolling in a group-based parent education program or a short-term home visitation program.

Income or educational eligibility may be self-declared at enrollment by the enrolling parent(s.) Verification of income or education is not necessary.

75% is calculated by each long-term and intensive home visitation program funded by the ECI Area board. Each program must meet the eligibility criteria for 75% of the families newly enrolled each fiscal year.

Families that are deemed eligible for the services because of a current IFSP or IEP must sign a release of information with the family support program so they may coordinate services with the Area Education Association (AEA.)

An IEP or IFSP refers to enrollment in Part B or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA.)

**Accountability System:**

*School Ready Budget Form*

- Document projected expenditures on the SR budget forms to support family support services and parent education programs for families with children prenatal – 5 years.

*ECIA Annual Report – Performance Measures School Ready Funds*

- Document through input, output, quality/efficiency and outcome data at a minimum the required performance measures of family support services and parent education programs.
- Beginning with the 2012 Annual Report, long-term and intensive home visiting programs will also be required to report the percentage of families enrolled each fiscal year that meet the eligibility criteria.
- Report all program funding sources and data to correspond with the total funding reported.

All funds used to financially support a family support or parent education program have state required performance measures. Failure to report annually the state required performance measures, or comply with the guidance provided in Tool FF may jeopardize the Early Childhood Iowa Area’s continued designation and may trigger the Early Childhood Iowa State Board to enact the Expenditures and Reporting Policy.

*Required Assessment Tools* - All programs shall use the following approved tool to report on the required performance measures:

- Long-term and intensive, in-home, family support services must use the modified Life Skills Progression Instrument.
- Short term, in-home or group-based parent education programs must use the Protective Factors Survey.

**Contractual Agreements with Programs:**

The Early Childhood Area local board will determine the contractual agreements at a local level with program providers. They may also require additional local performance measures to be reported. ECIA’s are strongly encouraged to include in their contracts with program providers the performance measures to be reported and required compliance with Tool FF.

**Technical Assistance Contact:**

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