



Iowa Department  
of Human Services

# Child Care Newsletter

December 1, 2015

Volume 2, Issue 1

## Child Care and Development Block Grant Sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems
2. Promote Family Engagement through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children,
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

You may learn more information and review the State Plan at the following link:

<https://dhs.iowa.gov/node/2309>

## CCDF Reauthorization Continued:

In November 2014, President Obama signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 into law. This reauthorizes the federal law that states must follow to receive funds for our child care programs. The federal law had not been updated since 1996 and makes significant advancements to:

- support the safety of children;
- establish policies for the state's Child Care Assistance program that are more family-friendly; and
- ensure parents and the public have more accessible and clear information about the child care choices available to them

The State of Iowa must submit a Child Care and Development Fund State Plan to the federal government by March 2016. This State Plan outlines how we, as a State, currently meet federal child care requirements and further, how we plan to implement the new requirements that the law has outlined.

We want to request your feedback and welcome your involvement and input to this document. This State Plan is expansive and you may not wish to review all sections. Please feel free to review any areas that are of interest to you and share your feedback with us.

A public hearing is also scheduled for January 7, 2016.

Please provide any specific feedback related to this plan to Ryan Page at [rpage@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:rpage@dhs.state.ia.us).

We will continue to use this newsletter, among many other communication strategies, to keep you informed as this work continues. The key to our success will be dependent, in large part, on the child care providers who serve our youngest children and families.

## Safe Holiday Decorating



### REMINDER

You may not use an assistant, substitute, or co-provider to care for children until they have been approved by the Department. Additionally, no person will be permitted to reside in the household until approved by the Department. For a person to be approved as an assistant, substitute, or co-provider OR to be approved to reside in the household, background checks must be completed.

It is the time of year that many family child care providers decorate their homes for the holidays. As a family child care provider, your home is also your business. Suddenly your child care children are surrounded by shiny, interesting, new decorations.

A common decoration is a Christmas tree, which are often adorned with glass ornaments and strings of lights. It is important to remember the DHS regulation that states that all electrical cords should be secured from access by a child- meaning that you need to find a way to contain the cords so the children can't trip or choke on them. Also consider the strings of lights you have indoors and outdoors and possibly in the play space. You may wish to consider the placement of the tree, where long lengths of cord are not necessary. Tree skirts and rugs can be a tripping hazard if not used correctly. Some providers have found it helpful to contain the tree behind a baby gate or in a portable crib, removing it when the child care is closed. Others have put the tree in a room not used by child care. Please remember that glass ornaments and tinsel are attractive to children and small decorations can be choking hazards. Consider placing stocking holders in an area that will be inaccessible as children can pull the stocking and the holder down on themselves. Potpourri and candles have small pieces and may cause asthmatic reactions.

Every child care home is different and you need to think about what works best in your particular situation. Child Care Resource and Referral Consultants and Child Care Nurse Consultants are available to come to your business and help you plan to decorate your space while keeping the safety of the children in mind. Have a happy (and safe) holiday season!



# Provider Spotlight: I am not a Babysitter

I started providing child care in April of 2007 out of my home. I was unregistered and I had no idea what I was doing or how to go about running my own business. I had worked in the corporate world, pretty much my whole adult life, and becoming self-employed wasn't an option I had even looked at. My last employer sold the company and my position was dissolved. I questioned myself, "What am I going to do now"? It really came down to what made financial sense for me; stay at home, care for my own children and care for a few more. I'm a good mom, "this shouldn't be too hard".

Wow, was I wrong. This was hard work and long hours! Being new to the field, I didn't really feel that clients understood how challenging my job was. I had a client say, "I wish I could sit at home and be a babysitter". "What? Are you kidding me? I don't think I had sat down once today!" That's when I decided I needed to educate myself and others, so that everyone understands how important our job is. We are developing the minds of children who will someday run our country! Okay, maybe

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that was a bit extreme, but not to me. My job matters. I am creating the future workforce, decision makers and caregivers. I can change the way we are viewed. Yep, just me. It was a bold task. So, I began.

After meeting other providers in the community, I was told about resources that were out there just waiting for me to use. First, I was introduced to HACAP. They offered a class about starting your own child care. Wow! That's what I needed. I then became a registered provider with the State of Iowa. The more training's I took, the more I became connected to the community and the opportunities started to present themselves. I took ChildNet next, 25 hours of DHS training, I really learned a lot. This training introduced me to Child Care Resource and Referral and that is how I became a QRS - Quality Rated Child Care Provider. I wasn't afraid to allow these people in my home. I figured if I was doing something wrong, they'd let me know and show me how to fix it and I couldn't have been more correct. My consultant is a great resource and I call on her often. I next joined a local association that introduced me to a variety of child care providers and the many different ways care is provided. This really helped me when I struggled for activities to offer the children I cared for and the direction I wanted to take my business. Lots of providers had great ideas! I found out that HACAP had a program called Paces to Quality and all I knew is that they would bring in fresh ideas and toys! Yes! Sign me up. Many hours of training later, far exceeding the minimum requirements by the State of Iowa, and through my connections with HACAP, In 2013 HACAP approached me about being a recipient for the National Accreditation Program scholarship. They would sponsor me, pay my fees and guide me through the process to become a Nationally Accredited child care professional. This very much appealed to my ultimate goal of changing how society views child care providers.

In March of 2014, I was the recipient of the Chris Carman "Friend of Children Award". This was a complete shock! I knew I had worked hard, mentoring providers, informing parents and educating myself, but to be acknowledged for it, was very rewarding. This past May was my largest accomplishment yet. I achieved the NAFCC, National Child Care Accreditation Certification.

My clients have been with me through the whole process. They understand the importance of quality and because of that, they educate others in the community. So, my message is this: **Knowledge is contagious. Educate yourself, stay current on the trends that are constantly changing and pass it on to your clients.** That's how we change how society views us, how our clients view us. **I am not a babysitter. I am an Early Childhood Educator.**

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