

Our Story: Early Childhood Matters with Story County Reads

April 13, 2021



CRUCIBLE
OF PRACTICE

Reflections on Lessons Learned



Moderator



Malai Amfah
Story County Reads
Director
United Way of Story County



“Our Story: Early Childhood Matters with Story County Reads”

Crucible of Practice: April 2021

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.



United Way of Story County

The Setting for our “Story” in Story County

Community Profile

Population = Approx 97,090

Mix of urban and rural housing

7 School districts (1 urban, 6 rural)

Enrolled K-12 = 10,872 total

Grades PK-5 = 5,473 total

Age 0-5 = 5,488

F/R Lunch Enrolled = 26% or 2,837 youth county-wide



The Introduction Of Our Story

BRINGING TOGETHER



- City staff
- School Districts
- Non-profits
- Iowa State University
- Public libraries
- Families
- Health Care Providers
- Community members
- Volunteers
- Philanthropy

**UNITED AROUND A
COMMON AGENDA**



I am somebody.

I was
somebody
when I came.

I'll be a
better

somebody
when
I leave.

-Rita
Pierson

The questions that brought us together

Are we supporting **ALL kids** and eliminating barriers to success?

Are kids **ready for school** when they enter kindergarten?

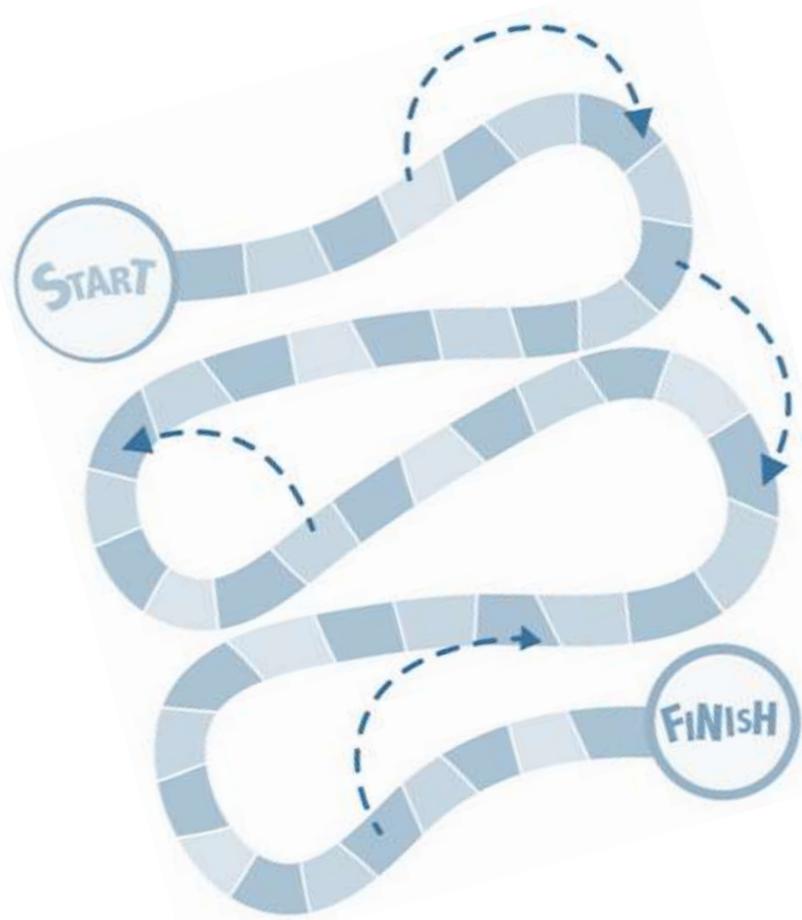
Are kids **able to read** at “grade level” by the end of **third grade**?

Are kids **attending school** regularly and if not, why?

Do kids have support to **maintain their health**, especially in early childhood and over the summer?

Do kids have learning opportunities **during the summer** and **afterschool**?

Our Story is a quest to support Story County children and youth with building and nurturing literacy skills



Late 2011 - First community conversations

2012 - Hunger Collaboration convenes

2012 - Joined the National CGLR

2013 - Launch of summer program in Nevada

2014 – ACSD expands summer program with us

2016 – APL & Ballard begins summer program

2017 – Summer program begins Collins Maxwell

2017 - “Ames Reads to “Story County Reads”

2018 - Expansion in all areas, new CSAP

2019 - Extended collaboration with other GLR communities

2020 – COVID-19 Response

2021 – “Recover, reimagine, rebuild...”



We begin our story with a cross-sector approach to nurturing early learners.



Early Childhood Partners

Ames Community School District

Ames Morning Rotary

Ames Public Library

Ames Town & Country Kiwanis

ACPC

ChildServe

Early Childhood Iowa

Iowa State University

LSI

MICA

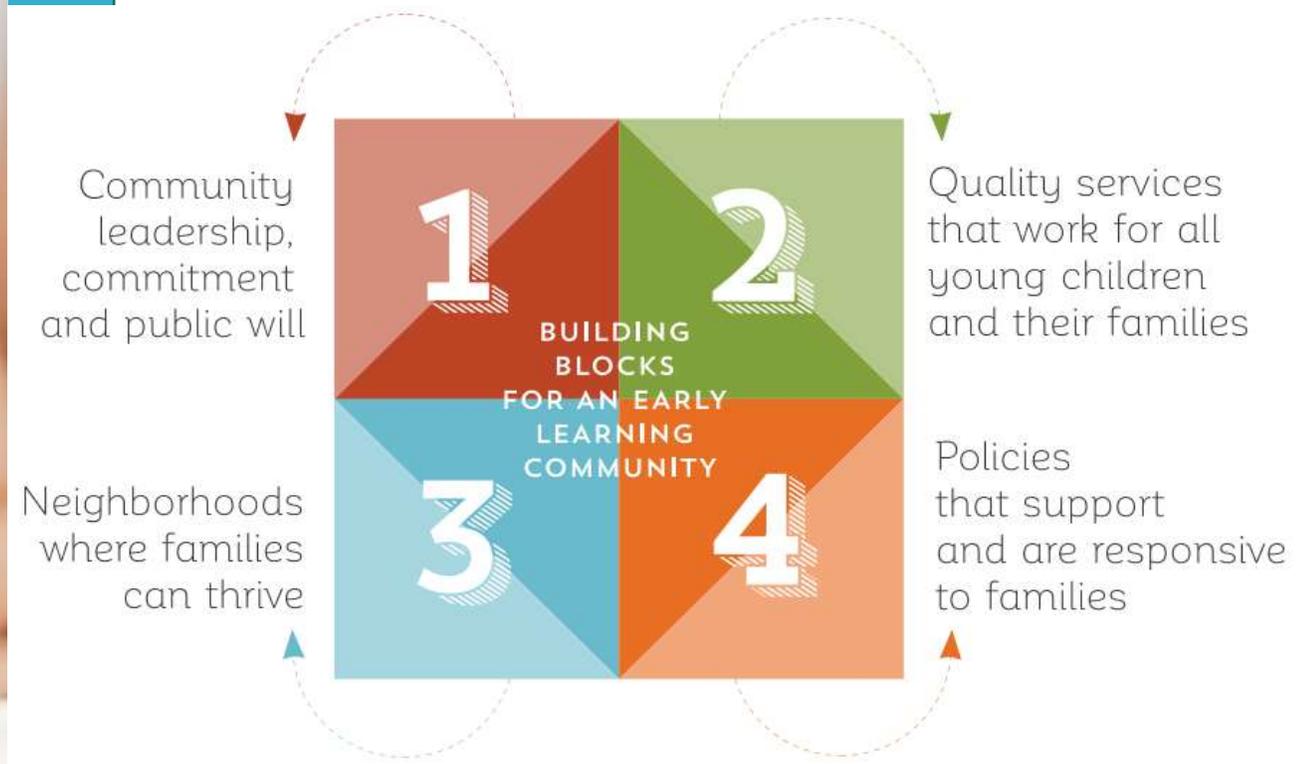
Nevada Community School District

Raising Readers in Story County

Story County Extension

YSS

A new approach for a new normal.





Identifying Our Assets: A Few of our Players



Connie Beecher
Associate Professor
Iowa State University



Sadie Bohr
Healthy Futures & Nest Programs
Coordinator
YSS



Lynne Carey
Board Member
Raising Readers in Story County



Nikki Fischer
ECI Area Director
Early Childhood Iowa -
BooSt Together for Children

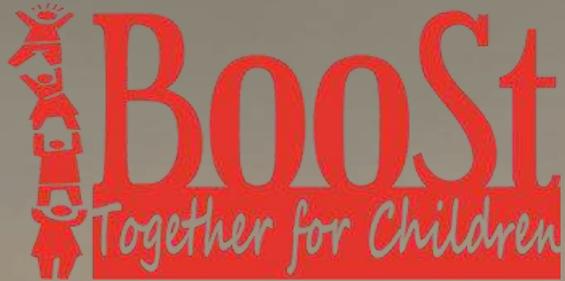


Jessica Miller
1st Five Site Coordinator
Mid-Iowa Community Action



Megan Thompson
Health Services Coordinator
Mid-Iowa Community Action

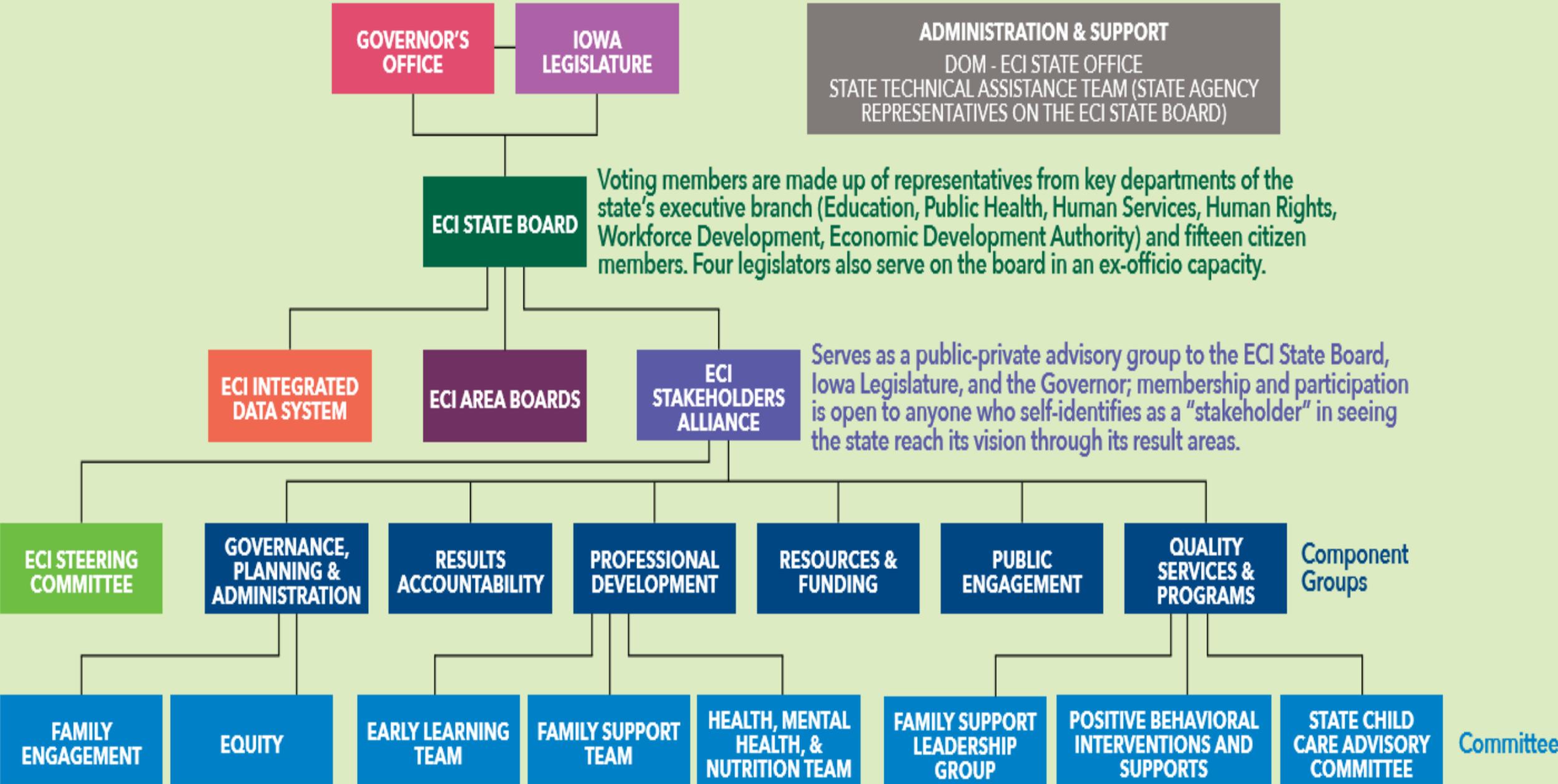
Chapter 1: Key Support from State and Local Stakeholders



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

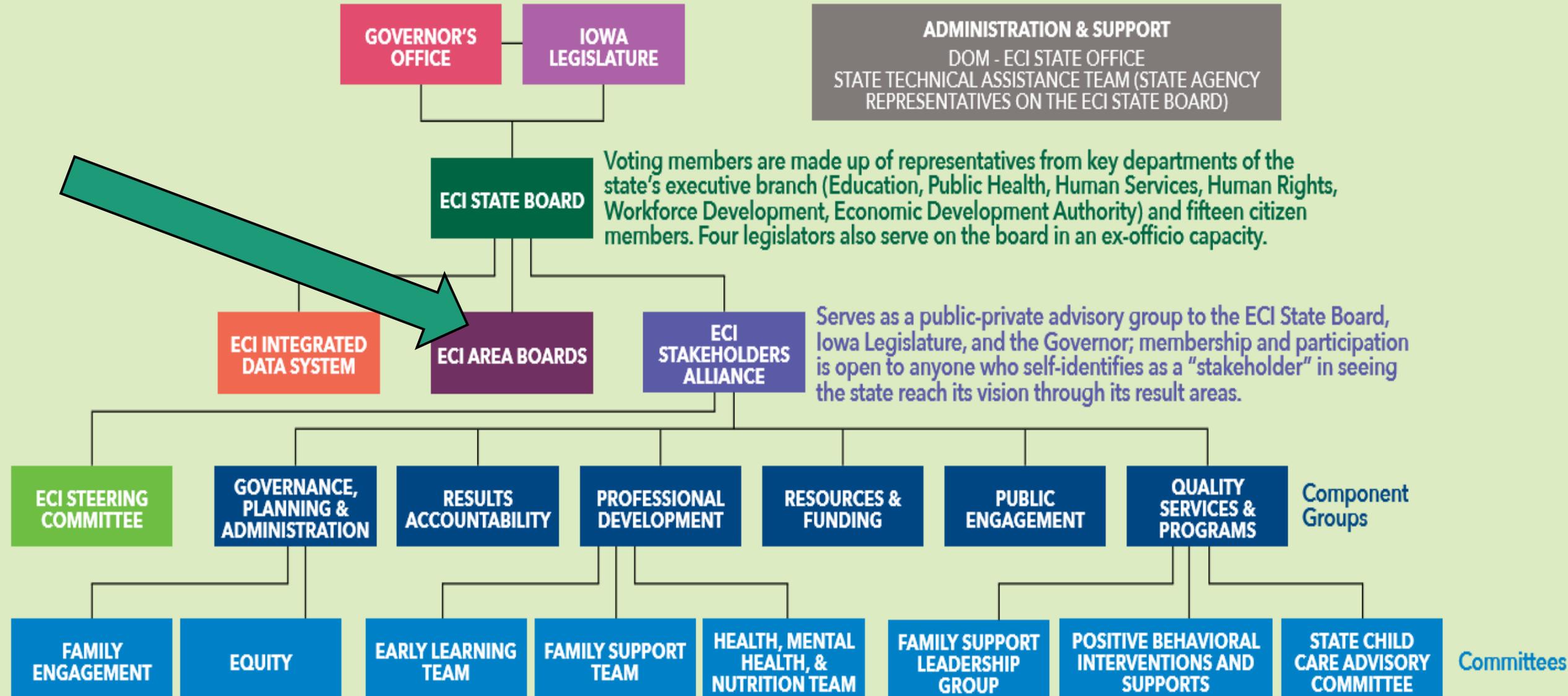


HOW THE CURRENT SYSTEM IS STRUCTURED



BooSt Together for Children is our county's local ECI board

HOW THE CURRENT SYSTEM IS STRUCTURED



OUR VISION FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN

BooSt Together for Children supports communities to have the capacity and commitment to ensure:

- **Children Are Healthy**
- **Children Are Ready to Succeed in School**
- **Child Care Environments are Secure and Nurturing**
- **Families are Secure and Nurturing**
- **The Community is Safe and Supportive**



How BooSt works:

- Support is given to nonprofits which implement in-home programs such as the Parents as Teachers and Healthy Futures programs
- Preschool scholarships are given for eligible families to promote access
- Training is offered for childcare providers
- Quality Improvement Grants are offered in the community

BooSt partners include:

- Lutheran Services In Iowa
- Colo-NESCO Preschool
- Mid Iowa Community Action- Child Care Nurse Consultant
- Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral- Orchard Place
- St. Paul Lutheran Preschool
- Tiger Tots Preschool
- Trinity Lutheran Preschool
- ISU Vet Med Preschool
- University Child Care
- Youth and Shelter Services



Our Board and Contact Information

BooSt Board Members

- Celeste Mortvedt- Chair
- Ed Gillott- Vice Chair
- Kelly Polich- Secretary
- Alex Gustafson
- Laura Phipps
- Gail Kenkel
- Lynn Chitty
- Latifah Faisal- Story County Board of Supervisors

Contact Information

- Area Director: Nikki Fischer
 - 515-433-4892
 - boost@boonecounty.iowa.gov
 - www.boostforchildren.org
 - 900 W. 3rd St, Boone, Ia 50036



Stakeholder Support: Iowa State University School of Education

What this looks like:
Community Outreach and Engagement

Fostering participatory relationships
with community partners to enable
integration of science with practice to
improve community outcomes.





**DREAM
BIG**

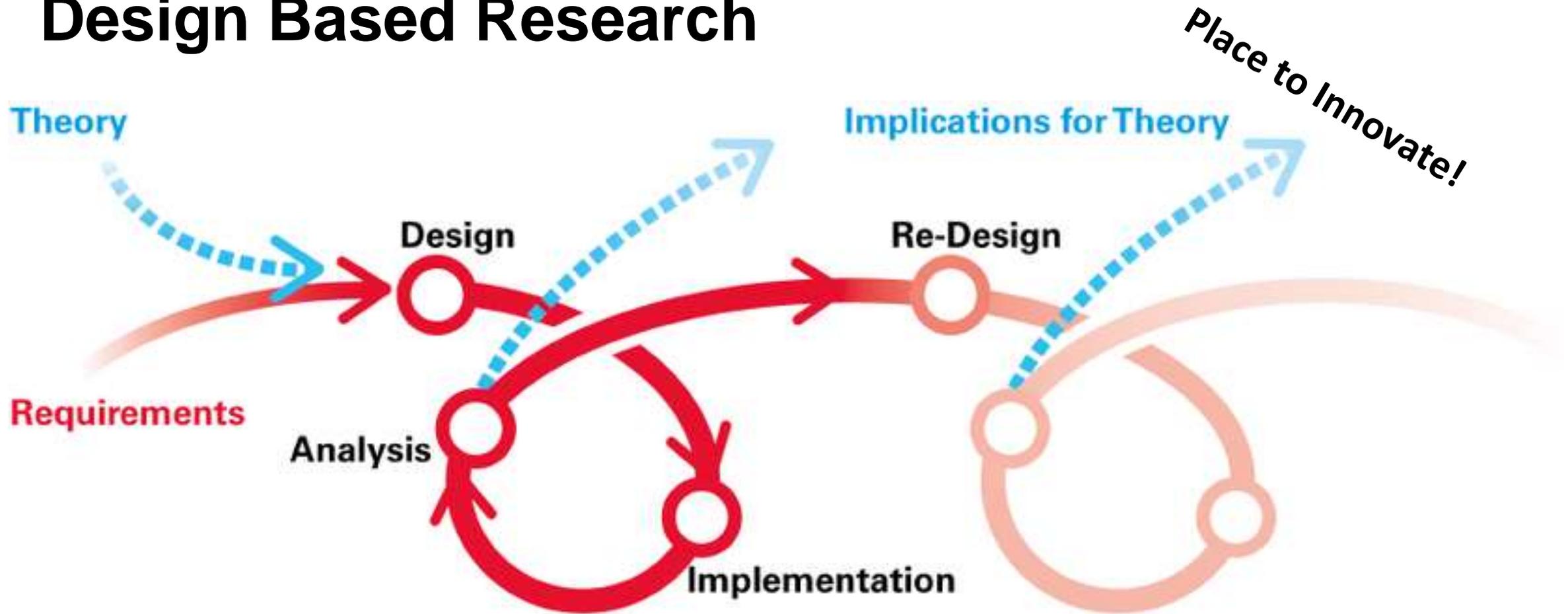


**SET
GOALS**



**TAKE
ACTION**

Design Based Research



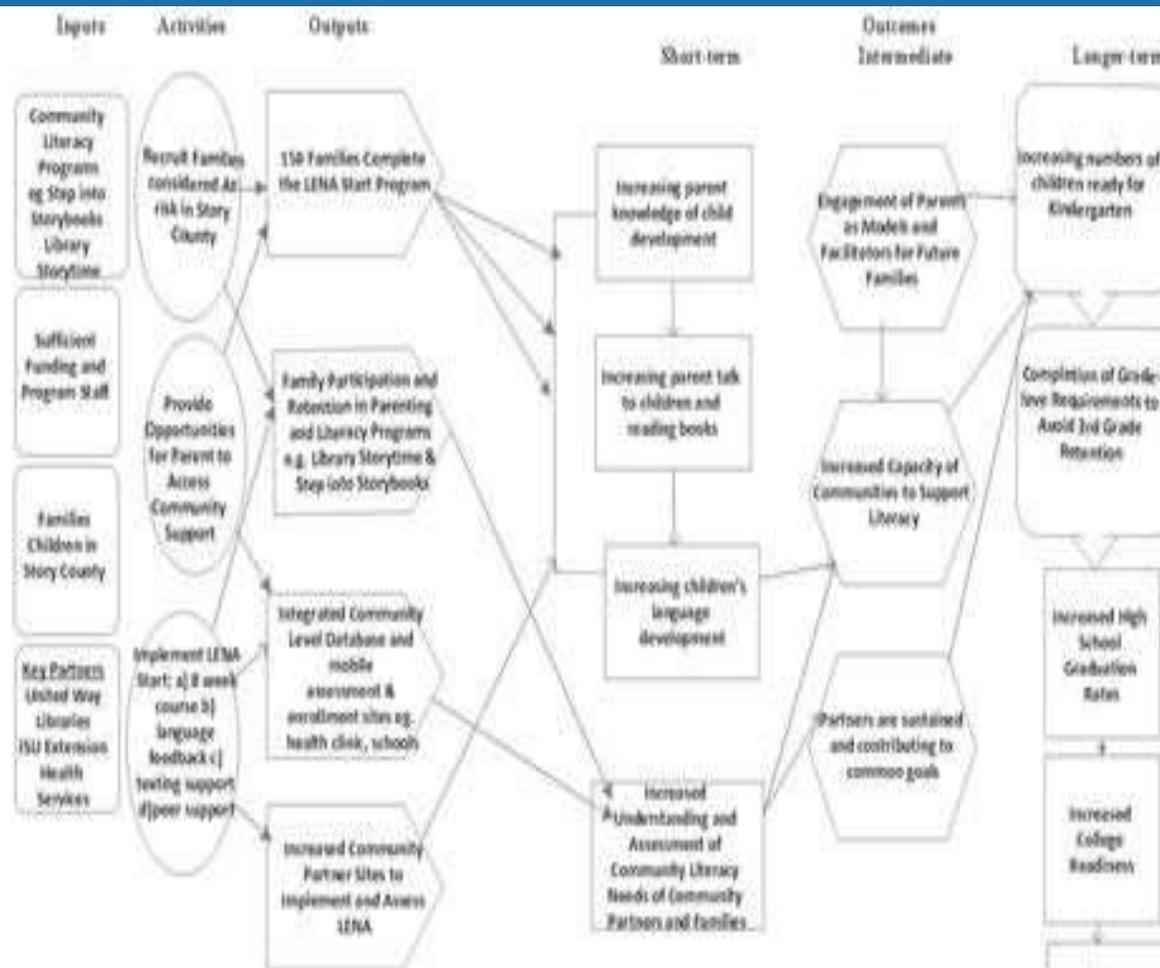
Picture Source: <http://www.ethanhein.com/wp/2017/design-based-research/>
Barab, S. A. (2014). [Design-based research: a methodological toolkit for engineering change](#). In K. Sawyer (ed.) *Handbook of the Learning Sciences*, Vol 2, (pp. 233-270), Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Example in Practice with Program “Small Talk”

Inspiration

Ideation

Implementation



Small Talk Project Logic Model





- Research happens in the setting where the practices take place
- Historic issues with lack of uptake of intervention may be avoided
- Bridge the “research-to-practice” divide – instead “research with practice”
- Expanded definition of research – into the scholarship of community engagement



Chapter 2: A Few of our Providers



We couldn't make change
happen without them

Ames Public Library

MICA

Raising Readers

YSS

Honorable Mention:

ACPC

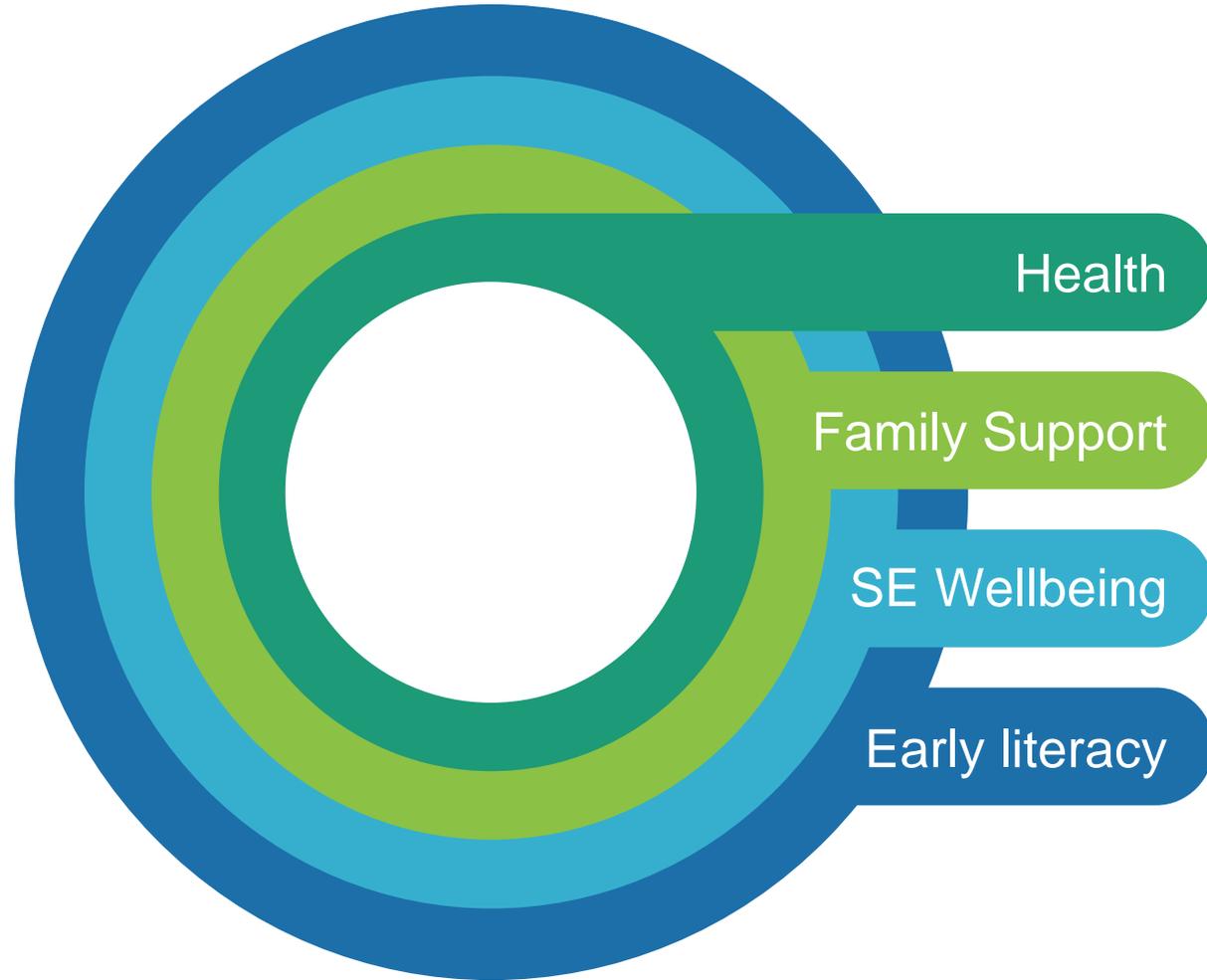
ChildServe

LSI

University Childcare Center



Our Providers & Programs to Support Healthy Development in Early Childhood



Settings for Services:

- In homes with families
- Virtual programs
- Community based settings:
 - Preschools
 - Libraries
 - Centers
 - Organization sites

Provider Example: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.

1st Five: Healthy Mental Development Initiative



1st Five Team in Story County:

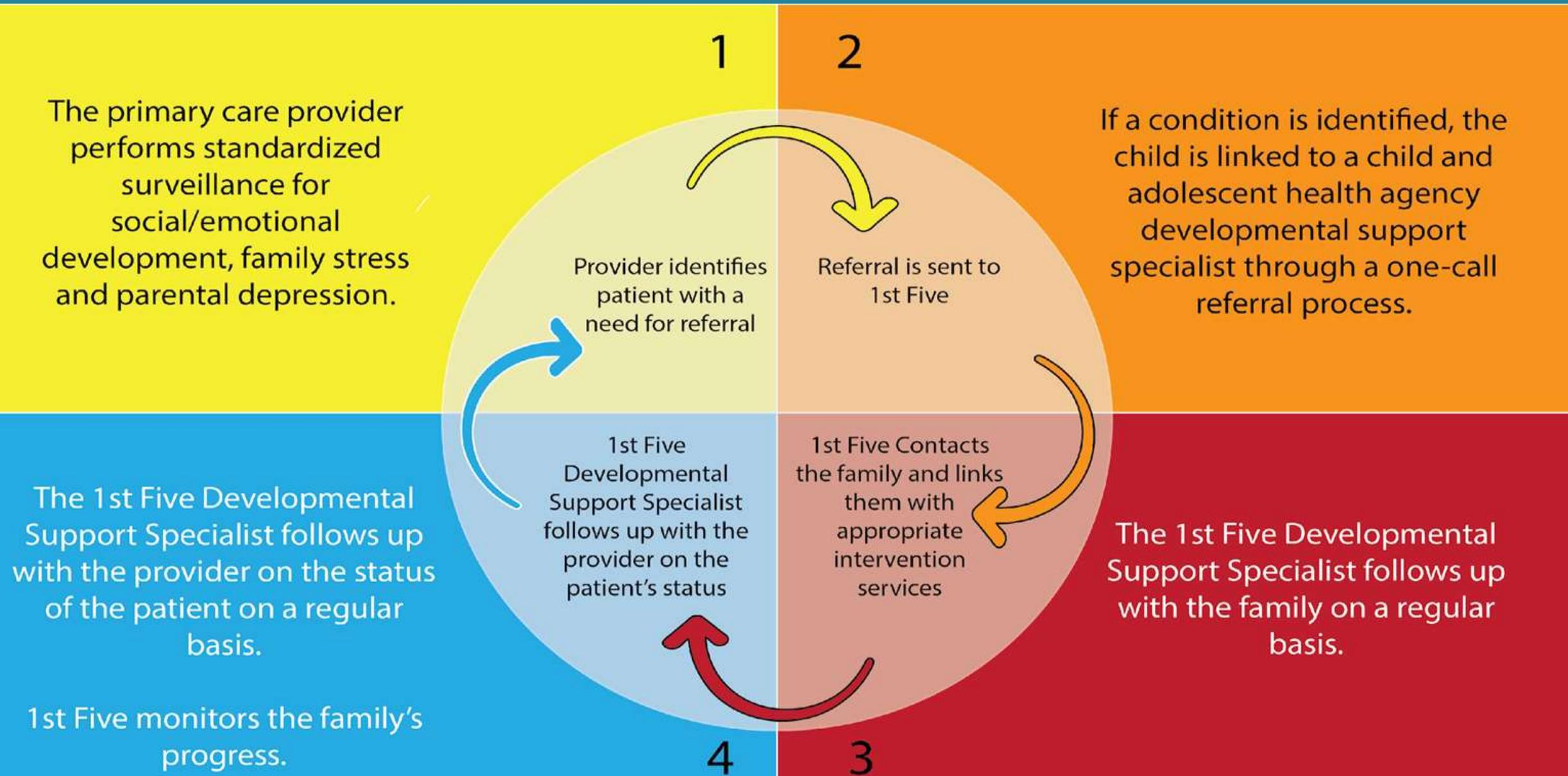
Jessica Miller, 1st Five Site Coordinator

Megan Thompson, Project Director

<https://www.idph.iowa.gov/1stfive>



How 1st Five Works:



Reasons Children are referred to 1st Five by Medical Providers



- Speech/Hearing
- Development Delay
- Autism Concerns/Failed M-CHAT
- Behavior
- Social-Emotional Skills
- Caregiver Depression
- Family Stress
- Childcare Needs
- Oral Health
- Social Stressors

Typical Referrals Out Made by 1st Five Staff:



Medical Interventions

- Early Intervention & Evaluation
- Developmental Delay
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Social Determinants of Health

- Financial Stress
- Housing Resources
- Maternal/Caregiver Depression
- Mental Health
- Behavior Issues
- Parent Education Programs
- Food Assistance
- Family Planning
- Medicaid/Hawki/Dental insurance needs
- Substance Abuse
- Childcare
- Head Start & Preschool
- Family Support
- Transportation

For every 1 medical provider referral to 1st Five, 2-3 additional referrals are identified when the Developmental Support Specialist contacts the family.

Provider Example: YSS



A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION
SERVING YOUTH AND FAMILIES SINCE 1976

Program Name: Healthy Futures

Sadie Bohr,

Healthy Futures and Nest Program Coordinator



Family Support in the home



Program aims towards supporting healthy pregnancies and healthy children who are ready to succeed in school.

A certified Family Development Specialist provides:

- Coordinated prenatal and postnatal home visitation services
- Parenting and child development education, screenings, goal setting, support, and referrals
- Ongoing support that is strength-based and solution focused
- Nationally recognized training
- Facilitated services from frontline to support well being and improved family functioning



Why Home Visitation?

Program meets parents and caregivers where they are most comfortable in the environment where children will be exploring and learning about life through family interactions.

Participating families receive 2 home visits in the first 3 months of enrollment.

After 3 months, families and their family Development Specialist discuss their level of need

EARLY LEARNING
FACTS

**VOLUNTARY
HOME VISITING
PROGRAMS**

WORK

IMPROVED NEWBORN
+ MATERNAL HEALTH

REDUCED CRIME +
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

PREVENTION OF
CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

IMPROVED FAMILY
ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

IMPROVED SCHOOL
READINESS

GREATER ACCESS TO OTHER
COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Parenting Education

"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world."

— Nelson Mandela

Education = Prevention

The use of evidence-based parenting curriculum educates parents about their child's developmental stages and provides tools to help them be the best parents they can be.

Understanding child development helps parents respond appropriately to their child's behavior, sets realistic expectations parents have for their child, and reduces rates of child abuse.

YSS Healthy Futures Results

FY 2020, we served 49 families and 56 children

- 71% of children were screened for developmental delays
- 100% of pregnant mothers were screened for post-partum depression
- 93% of families increased their social support systems
- 75% of parents improved their knowledge of child development and parenting
- 87% of families improved or maintained their family's functioning, problem solving and communication



Provider Example: Raising Readers in Story County



Our mission is to improve language and literacy development in children from birth to age eight and nurture healthy parent child relationships.



Community Connections Powerful Partnerships



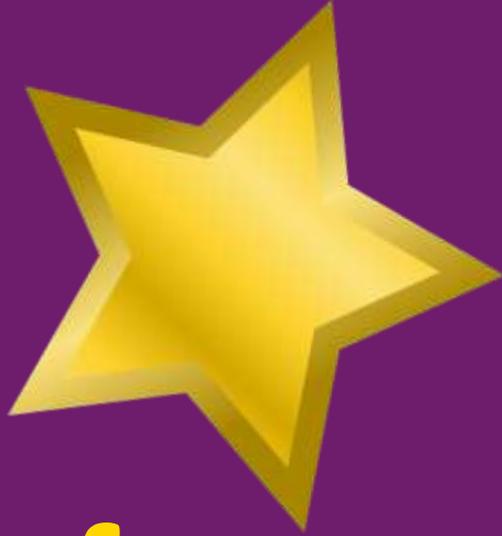
Passion and Tenacity Learning Together



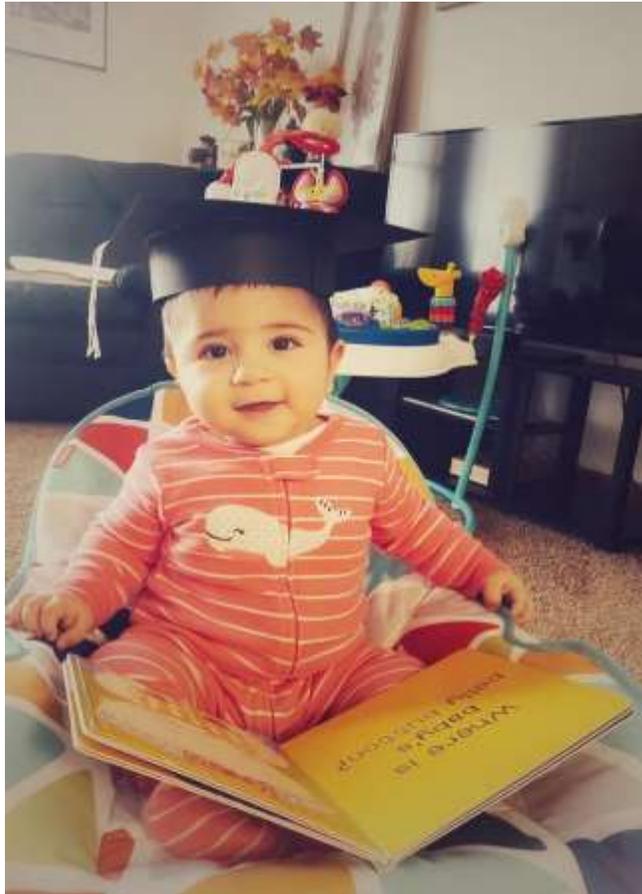
Focus on Mission and Clients Reduce Barriers



Singing
Talking
And
Reading for
Success



Don't forget to CELEBRATE!!

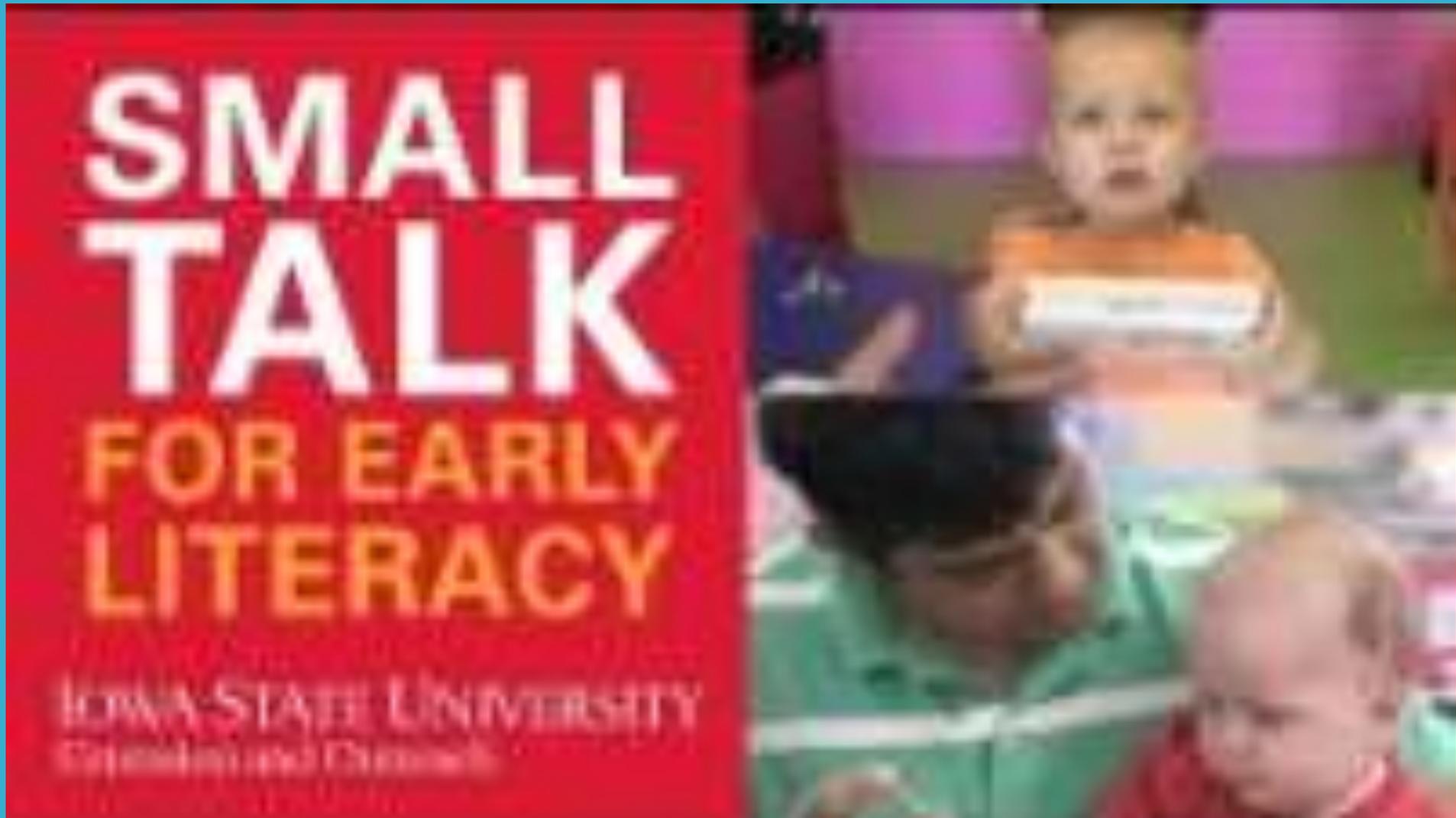


Chapter 3: Collaboration Makes Us Stronger



- Healthy Futures & Raising Readers to provide the S.T.A.R.S. program
 - Benefits = Families have more services that support their children
- Healthy Futures provides referrals to MICA for multiple services
 - Cross collaboration of resources provides the best possible outcome of success for program participants and their children
- Raising Readers and Iowa State University work together to provide the S.T.A.R.S. program

Collaboration Example: “Small Talk”



Chapter 4: Lessons Learned from 2020



- Some of our programs, like 1st Five, are unique program and thrive by connecting with parents & caregivers over the phone to provide services
- Connections with health providers did change. More virtual meetings and trainings happened instead of face-to-face interactions in the clinic or in community spaces
- Families have needed more support during the pandemic, 1st Five has provided numerous new resources for various needs stemming from the pandemic. Community partners are key.

Chapter 4: Lessons Learned from 2020

- Families liked having someone to connect with over the phone to check in with them & provide assistance when needed
- Services were provided differently, but families were still able to get what they needed
- Our community partners have been crucial in getting families connected during the pandemic (ex: e-readers while libraries were closed, drive up & delivery food pantries)

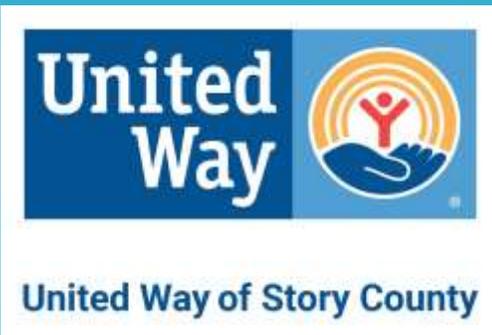
THEMES:

- Community connections & powerful partnerships
- Passion & Tenacity
- Learning Together
- Focus on mission, families, and children
- Reduce barriers for services and resources

The End

For more information
please contact:

Malai Amfahr,
Story County Reads Director
United Way of Story County
mamfahr@uwstory.org



Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

ARPA Bets Big on Accelerating Learning Recovery

Tuesday, April 20, 3:00 p.m. ET/12:00 p.m. PT

FUNDER-TO-FUNDER CONVERSATION

Building on the American Rescue Plan Act: What's Next for Reducing Child Poverty

Tuesday, April 20, 3:00 p.m. ET/12:00 p.m. PT

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

\$22B for Afterschool & Summer: Realizing the Opportunity for Communities

Tuesday, April 20 3:00 p.m. ET/12:00 p.m. PT

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

The Fall K-3 Classroom: What the Data Imply About Composition, Challenges & Opportunities

Tuesday, April 27, 3:00 p.m. ET/12:00 p.m. PT

