



Early Childhood Iowa Area for Boone and Story County

Community Plan

2023-2028



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Section I

General Information

BooSt ECI Area Vision and Mission

Vision: Every child in the BooSt Together for Children Early Childhood Iowa Area will be healthy and successful.

Mission: The mission of the BooSt Together for Children Early Childhood Iowa Area is to improve the well-being of children birth through age five and their families by improving the quality and affordability of early care and education and family support services.

Location: The BooSt Together for Children ECI Area serves Boone and Story Counties in central Iowa. BooSt will use funds allocated to support to programs and services that meet the needs of children from birth through age five and their families throughout the ECI Area. Early Care and Education programs and services will be supported as allowable through the requirements outlined by the legislature and through other funding sources that may be secured for local programming purposes.

It is the practice of the BooSt ECI Area Board to work toward ensuring access to programs and services for all eligible children and families. The Board will address on a case by case basis when instances arise where children or families, or services for children or families, cross the ECI Area boundaries. The ECI Area Director participates in statewide and regional ECI Directors Meetings to ensure cooperation and collaboration across ECI Area boundaries.

Use of the Community Plan: The *BooSt Together for Children Community Plan* reflects state and local goals that affect children from birth through five years of age. This plan will guide the decisions of the ECI Area Board. At a minimum, the BooSt ECI Area Board will review the Community Plan on an annual basis to make sure the needs in the community are being met and to identify if the community needs have changed. Local ECI Area indicators will be updated annually for the ECI Area Board review, along with progress reports from funded programs and services.

Updates to the Community Plan will be shared with existing community stakeholder groups in the ECI Area, as well as being posted on the ECI Area's website for access by the public and community partners. Through working collaboratively with community partners, the ECI Area will work to improve the health and wellbeing of young children and their families.

The most recent version of the Community Plan document will be posted on the ECI Area website to ensure members of the public have access to the information. In addition, the Community Plan and all updates made to the plan will be shared with representatives of community stakeholder groups.

ECI Area Description: Located in central Iowa, the BooSt ECI Area covers all of Boone and Story Counties. The ECI Area encompasses 1,144 square miles, connected by US Highway 30 which runs through both counties. Boone County is divided by the Des Moines River, and is home to several transportation systems including the Union Pacific Railway. Story County is home to Iowa State University. There are three hospitals located in the ECI Area, including Boone County Hospital (Boone), Mary Greeley Medical Center (Ames), and Story County Medical Center (Nevada).

Communities include: *Boone County*: Beaver, Berkley, Boone, Boxholm, Fraser, Luther, Madrid, Ogden, Pilot Mound, Sheldahl, Jordan, Logansport, Mackey, Moingona, and Zenorsville

Story County: Ames, Cambridge, Collins, Colo, Gilbert, Huxley, Kelley, Maxwell, McCallsburg, Nevada, Roland, Sheldahl, Slater, Story City, and Zearing

There are eleven public school districts located within the ECI Area, including Ames, Boone, Collins-Maxwell, Colo-Nesco, Ballard-Huxley, Madrid, Ogden, Roland-Story, Gilbert, Nevada, and United. Four additional school districts have small catchments areas within the boundaries of the BooSt ECI Area - North Polk, Southeast Webster - Grand, West Marshall,

and Woodward Granger. All public schools within the ECI Area have preschool programs. There are also four private schools in the ECI Area that have preschool programs - Ames Christian School (Ames), Sacred Heart (Boone), St. Cecilia (Ames), and Trinity Lutheran (Boone).

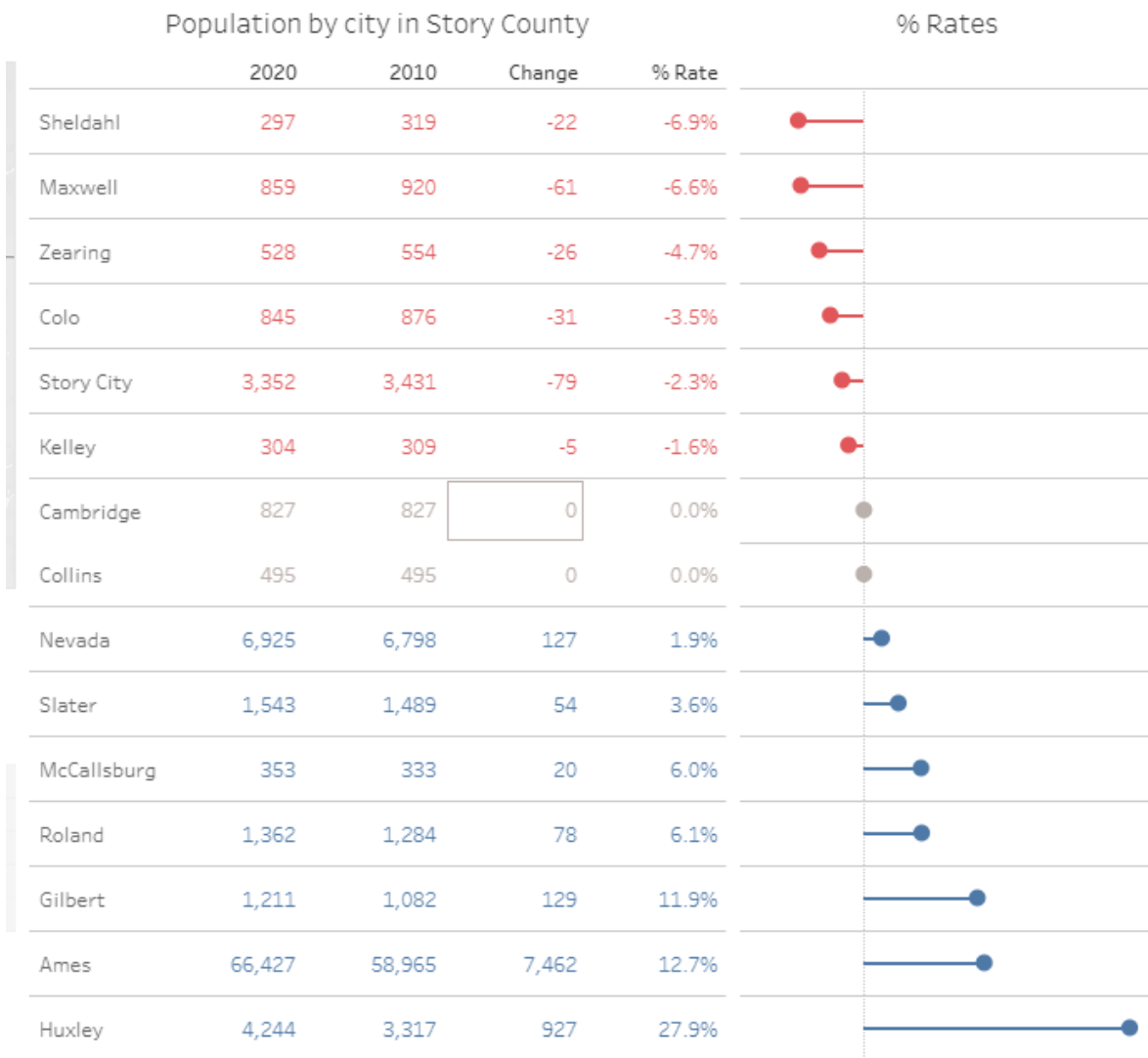
ECI Area Demographics: American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2020 indicates a total population of 125,252 an increase of 4007 individuals in the two-county BooSt ECI Area, an increase of 3%. The ECI Area is primarily rural areas surrounding the two population centers of Boone and Ames. These two cities represent over 63% of the total ECI Area population. Des Moines Area Community College has campuses located in Boone and Ames. Iowa State University is located in Ames. Des Moines Area Community College and Iowa State University provide a positive impact on population and the economic vitality of the ECI Area.

The 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) reported a total of 6,346, ages five years and younger in the ECI Area. 20% of family households in the ECI Area reported having children younger than 6 years of age. 43.8% family households identified as married with children zero to 5 years; 8.6% reported as female households and 5% reported as male headed households.

According to 2020 Census data, the ECI Area had a higher rate of residents 25 years of age and older with Bachelor or higher education degrees than the State of Iowa (ECI Area = 44% State of Iowa =30.6%). There were variances between Boone and Story Counties in the percent of residents with Bachelors or higher degrees (Boone County =25.4% Story county 51.9%). The percent of ECI Area residents without a high school diploma was nearly 5%.

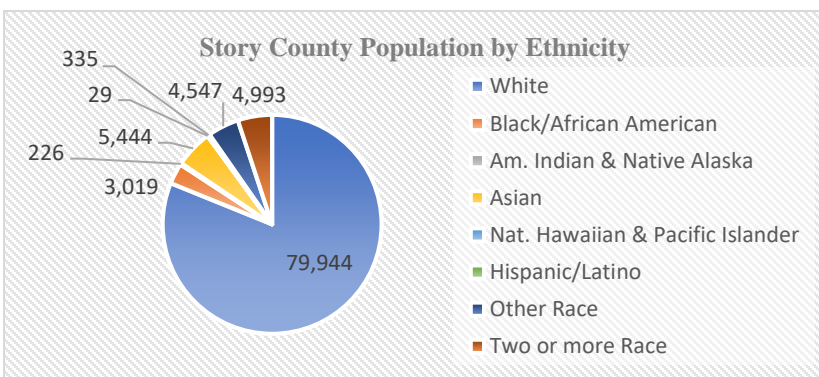
Iowa Workforce Development reports the October 2020 unemployment rate for Boone County was 2.2%, Story County unemployment rate was 2%. These rates are less than the statewide rate of 2.9%

❖ US Census Results 2020 per county:



Total population in Story County:

2020 Census	98,537
2010 Census	89,542
County change	8,995
County average	10.0%



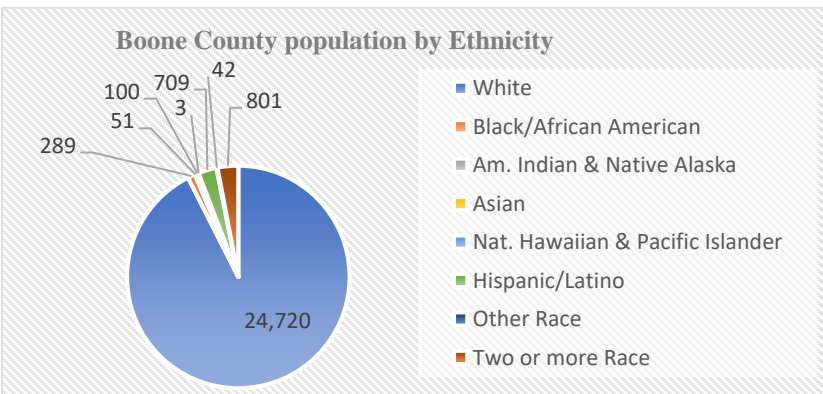
Population by city in Boone County

% Rates

	2020	2010	Change	% Rate	
Berkley	23	32	-9	-28.1%	
Boxholm	181	195	-14	-7.2%	
Pilot Mound	163	173	-10	-5.8%	
Beaver	46	48	-2	-4.2%	
Ogden	2,007	2,044	-37	-1.8%	
Boone	12,460	12,661	-201	-1.6%	
Fraser	101	102	-1	-1.0%	
Madrid	2,802	2,543	259	10.2%	
Luther	152	122	30	24.6%	

Total population in Boone County:

2020 Census	26,715
2010 Census	26,306
County change	409
County average	1.6%



Section II

Community Needs

Information from the US Census Bureau ACS on the Iowa State Library was used to update the demographic information about Boone and Story Counties. In addition, needs assessments from other agencies, Boone County and Story County Public Health Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plans were also reviewed.

Mid Iowa Community Action Head Start Needs Assessment - The 2020 needs assessment included a review of administrative data, as well as survey data from low-income families, staff members and stakeholders in the five counties served. Families identified the high cost of health insurance and the lack of access to mental health services as high priority needs. It was also noted that their data showed that in Story County 40% of Hispanic children 0-4 were in poverty (ACS).

Boone County and Story County Public Health Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plans - Public health departments statewide completed needs assessments and developed Health Improvement Plans for their counties of service, which were due in 2020. Both counties identified access to mental health services and access to dental health services as priority needs.

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa 2018 Needs Assessment – Statistics gathered by Prevent Child Abuse Iowa (PCAI) show that statewide teen births have declined by 50%. Abuse rates per 1000 children Boone and Story Counties are close to the state average of 12 per 1000. The assessment also found that single parents, especially women, were more likely to live in poverty.

The Story County Child Care Coalition initiated through Story County United Way – In April of 2022 a Community Collaboration initiated by the Story County United Way with BooSt Together for Children ECI, the Iowa Women’s Foundation, Ames Chamber of Commerce, and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) & Child Care Providers to convene a conversation around Community Solutions to childcare shortages and direct American Rescue Plan Act (ARRPA) funding.

The Iowa Women Foundation (IWF) shared local childcare data gathered by CCRR. Participants broke into groups to explore five different solutions to childcare issues. It was noted that low unemployment has had an unexpected impact on home providers. As providers face higher insurance costs, some are choosing to leave childcare for jobs that offer health insurance.

The IWF shared Hamilton County Early Childhood Iowa program business supporting Child Care programs. Building relationships with the business community to support additional child care slots. The connection of how the need for childcare impacts local businesses and where the support of businesses can be most effective.

Improving early identification of mental health concerns was also a goal. The ASQ-SE was funded for Family support agency. In addition, ASQ training and kits were funded for Preschool programs to assure assessment twice a year.

Grade Level Reading – The BooSt ECI Area has also participated in Grade Level Reading efforts sponsored by United Way of Story County. Various workgroups have gathered information on nationally recognized best practices.

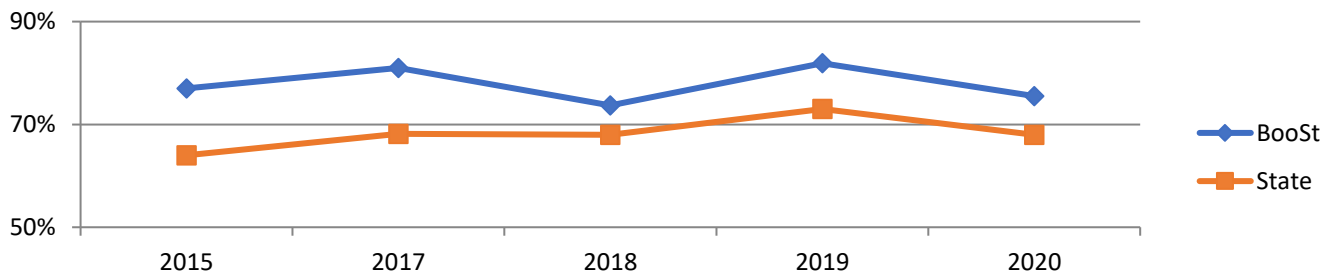
Results and Analysis of the ECI Area Board Priorities and Indicators

Children Ready to Succeed in School

FAST Assessment Graph; Kindergarten children proficient

Results Area	Priority	Rationale for Identification or Deletion of Priority
Children Ready to Succeed in School	All children have access to affordable quality early learning opportunities	Efforts must focus on not only making services available, but also striving for services in the early childhood system to demonstrate quality practices. The Board will work with community partners to promote awareness of quality services, and to provide supports that help providers, families, friends and neighbors create quality environments for children.

Kindergarten Fall Literacy Assessment



Source: Iowa Department of Education

Year	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal
Boost ECI	77%	81%	74%	82%	76%	85%
State	64%	68%	68%	73%	68%	

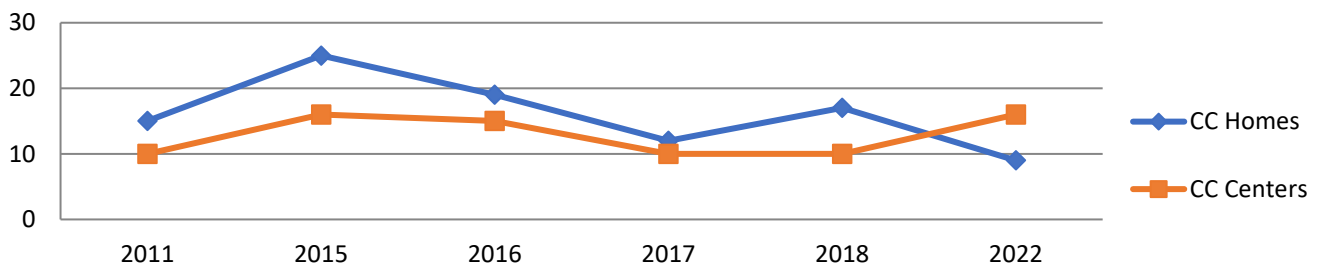
Indicator analysis and discussion: While the overall trend is positive board members and stakeholders noted that there is wide variation when looking at disaggregated data from each school district. It was recommended that the board explore why this variability exists and to compare how children compare on reading proficiency at the end of third grade. It was also recommended that childcare settings be encouraged to use formative assessments such as Gold so that they can provide more timely support to young children.

Secure & Nurturing Environments

-No. of CC Providers with QRS/IQ4k ratings >3 - Graph

Results Area	Priority	Rationale for Identification or Deletion of Priority
Secure and Nurturing Environments	Support experienced and well-trained early childhood providers and staff members	It is crucial to have well trained staff providing services in the local early childhood system of services. The Board will work with community partners to support resources that advance the professional development needs of early childhood providers.

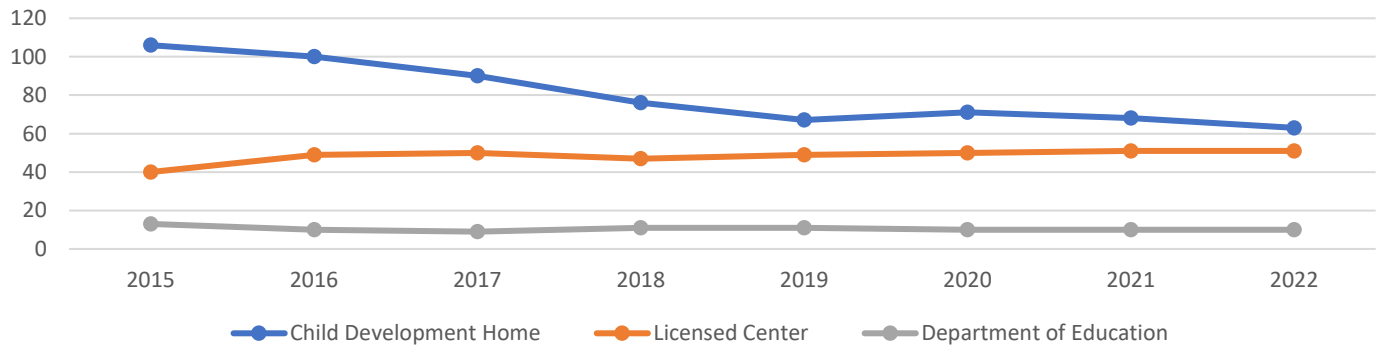
No. of CC Providers with QRS Rating \geq 3



Source: Iowa Dept of Human Services and CCRR

Year	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018	2022
CC Homes	15	25	19	12	17	9
CC Centers	10	16	15	10	10	16

NO. of Child Development Homes, Licensed Centers & Department of Education Programs



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Child Development Home	106	100	90	76	67	71	68	63
Licensed Center	40	49	50	47	49	50	51	51
Department of Education	13	10	9	11	11	10	10	10

Indicator analysis and discussion: It was noted that the number of quality rated centers and homes are decreasing. Many of the home providers do not participate in QRS or IQ4K. CCR&R states Child Care Providers are taking fewer classes. Earl Crow, IDHHS Child Development Home Compliance Officers stated Child Development Homes have decreased in Boone & Story counties by 50% in the last 10 years.

Board members and stakeholders noted that families with limited incomes are often forced to place affordability ahead of quality when choosing childcare. While studies show that high quality is an essential component of imparting lasting benefits in early education; families also need to be able to afford high quality care. Currently access is limited for at risk children.

In addition, the Child Care Crisis has escalated the need for quality Child Care as family are having to take whatever slots are available for Child Care or opt to stay at home to care for their child delaying employment and increasing economic instability for the family.

Child Care Deserts: Maintaining employment due to child care shortages can be a struggle for families. It is to be noted that about 25% of Iowa zip codes qualify for child care deserts. The definition of a child care desert is a zip code that:

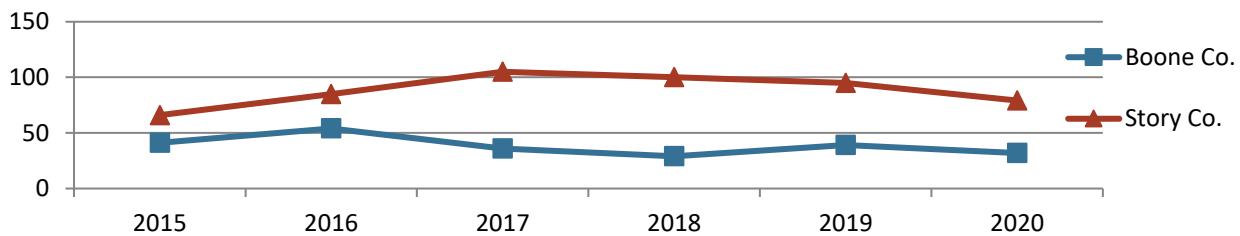
1. Has at least 31 children under age 5
2. Has at least one registered child care facility and
3. Has no more than 3 kids per each spot in a registered child care facility as defined by IQ4K-rated child care providers

Out of the 23 towns in the Boone & Story County ECI Area 7 of 23 towns are recognized as a child care desert. Those towns are: Cambridge, Collins, Colo, Madrid, Roland, Slater and Zearing. These towns are considered rural areas with few resources.

Secure and Nurturing Families -Abused or Neglected children under age 6 – Graph

Results Area	Priority	Rationale for Identification or Deletion of Priority
Secure and Nurturing Families	Enhance development of nurturing bonds and healthy relationships	Quality family support services are valuable resources for families of young children to encourage healthy and nurturing family relationships. The Board will work with community partners to connect families with family support resources in the community.

Abused or Neglected Children under age 6



Source: Iowa Dept of Human Services

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boone Co.	41	54	36	29	39	32
Story Co.	66	85	105	100	95	79

Indicator analysis and discussion: Abuse and neglect rates for Boone and Story County are fairly close to statewide rates. During the needs assessment participants found it difficult to make meaningful suggestions when reacting to child abuse rates. It was seen as too global an indicator to serve as a guide to make policy and programmatic changes. For example, the decline in abuse rates were more likely the result of the Pandemic rather than an actual decline in the number of abuse cases.

The BooSt ECI Area Board will work with stakeholders and other ECI areas to identify an indicator that is more closely tied to the children served by home visiting programs we fund.

Child Abuse Definition

Child abuse is defined through state laws, so there is no federal standard throughout the Country. In Iowa, the Legislature defines “Child abuse” to include the following harm.

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or other care necessary for a child’s health and well-being.
- Intended physical injury
- Sexual abuse of a child
- Presence of an illegal drug in a child’s body as a result of actions or neglect.
- Allowing a known sex offender, who is not the child’s biological parent or the caretaker’s spouse, custody or access to a child.
- Manufacturing a dangerous substance in a child’s presence
- Mental injury to a child
- Providing access to or showing obscene material to a child.
- Mental injury to a child
- Providing access to or showing obscene material to a child
- Sex trafficking (“the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for the purpose of commercial sexual activity”)

According to Iowa law, the harm of a child is considered “child abuse” when it’s caused by the actions or neglect of someone who is responsible for the child’s wellbeing. The following individuals can be charged with child abuse.

- Parent or guardian
- Foster Parent
- Health care or residential treatment employee
- Child care employee
- A relative or anyone living with a child, who is responsible for his or her supervision.
-

Societal Cost of Child Abuse

Children who are raised in safe, nurturing environments are more likely to grow in responsible, contributing members of society. For every \$50 spent to treat abuse, only \$1 is spent to prevent it from occurring. Studies show investing in prenatal support and education is less expensive and more effective than trying to treat the effects of child abuse. Those who are subject to child abuse face emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioral development challenges at higher rates than children who aren’t abused. Specifically, children who are abused are more likely to:

- Perform poorly in school
- Develop Unhealthy relationships
- Attempt suicide
- Suffer from: Drug Abuse, Attention deficits, Cigarette addiction, depression
- * Violent aggression
- * Obesity
- * Alcoholism

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs)

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs) conducted by Robert Anda and Dr. Vincent Felitti revealed these major societal costs that result from childhood trauma. Iowa is one of 19 states taking action based on the ACEs study. ACEs data is being collected this year and a steering committee is determining how to best address childhood adversity in the state.

The monetary costs associated with child abuse are staggering as well. An economic impact analysis study released by Prevent Child Abuse America in April 2012 estimates the cost of child abuse and neglect in the U.S. at \$80 billion or nearly \$64,000 per child, this year. These estimates include direct costs (hospitalizations, mental health treatment, child welfare system, and law enforcement) as well as indirect costs (special education, early intervention, adult homelessness, mental health and health care, juvenile and adult criminal justice, and lost work productivity).

What is clear from these studies is that child abuse affects everyone. We can significantly reduce the costs associated with treating child abuse by investing in programs that prevent child abuse from happening, but it will take everyone working together to support Iowa’s families.

Iowa Department of Human Services

The child protection process starts with a report being received by a centralized intake system of the Iowa Department of Human Services. For the unit to accept a report as a possible case of child abuse, the allegations must involve:

- A victim who is less than 18 at the time of the allegation
- A possible perpetrator who is a “caretaker”
- An allegation that once or more of certain specified harms had occurred

These are the three core requirements for a case to be accepted. The only exception regarding the caretaker requirement involves cases of alleged sexual abuse, where any household member – not just a caretaker – can be a perpetrator.

The Iowa Department of Human Services began its Differential Response (DR) System in January 2014. The new system consists of two pathways, Family Assessment (FA) and Child Abuse Assessment (CA), to respond to allegations of neglect and abuse. The new FA, pathway responds to less serious allegations of child neglect. Differential Response did not impact the criteria for accepting a report for assessment. Code changes did impact worker response times, the labeling of perpetrators and victims, and report conclusions categories for less serious neglect cases following the acceptance of a report for assessment. In addition, Code changes established a firm path for cases to be re-assigned from the FA pathway to CA pathway. These decisions were based on the premise that safety of a child is first and foremost in a FA and CA.

Founded (Confirmed and Placed) means that more than half of the available evidence shows that abuse occurred, and the abuse DOES meet the criteria for placement on the Central Abuse Registry. This assessment summary will be kept on the Registry for ten years (or ten years after the most recent confirmed abuse when the same victim or person responsible is placed on the Registry). This summary will be sealed for eight years and then destroyed. A summary involving founded sexual abuse is sealed for thirty years and then destroyed.

Confirmed means that more than half of the available evidence shows that abuse occurred, both the abuse Does Not meet the criteria for placement on the Central Abuse Registry. The child abuse assessment summary is retained five years from date of intake or five years from the date of closure of the service record, whichever occurs later.

Not Confirmed means that it was not possible to determine, by more than half of the available evidence that abuse occurred. The child abuse assessment summary is retained five years from date of intake or five years from the date of closure of the service record, whichever occurs later.

Annually, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) provides child abuse data. The data reveals trends in child abuse, which assists Prevent Child Abuse Iowa in determining the State’s needs and priorities pertaining to child abuse prevention efforts.

Child Abuse in Iowa						
Child Abuser Reports: Ages 0-17 in Iowa						
This data counts each report of child neglect and abuse. Each report may address one or multiple children.						
This data counts only the report – or assessment – and not individual children						
State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Iowa	25,707	33,418	35,029	33,00418	30,151	35,593
Abused Children Ages 0-17 in Iowa						
The data counts each child at the time of a confirmed or founded assessment of abuse or neglect.						
State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Iowa	8,892	11,229	11,562	11,463	10,534	11,286
Percent of Abused Children under the Age of 5 in Iowa						
This data counts the age of each child at the time of a confirmed or founded assessment of abuse or neglect.						
If a child had multiple assessments ,age is counted into the age category the child meets at the time the most adverse assessment was reported.						
State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Iowa	51.2%	47.4%	46/9%	46.4%	47.3%	47.3%

FY21 Iowa Analysis
Of all substantiated child abuse or neglect:
 55% was neglect (denial of critical care).
 23% was dangerous sub-stance
 9% was presence of illegal drugs in a child’s body
 7% was physical abuse.
 4% was sexual abuse

FY21 Iowa Analysis
of the total number of abused or neglected children:
 5,342 (47%) were 5 years of age or younger.
 2,850 (25%) were between 6-10 years
 3,094 (28%) were older than 11 years

Data Source: Iowa Department of Human Services.

Child Abuse in Boone & Story county						
Child Abuse Reports by County						
County	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Boone	233	260	248	284	269	281
Story	427	541	587	557	472	572
Abused Children Ages 0-17 by County						
County	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Boone	96	87	76	102	93	88
Story	177	244	233	225	203	213
Percent of Abused Children Under the Age of 5 by County						
County	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Boone	56.3%	41.4%	38.2%	38.2%	34.4%	33%
Story	48%	43%	42.9%	42.2%	38.9%	42.3%

FY21 Boone & story county Analysis
Of all substantiated child abuse or neglect

- 68% Denial of Critical Care
- 14% Dangerous Substance
- 6% Physical Abuse
- 5% Presence of illegal drugs in a Child's body
- 3% Sexual Abuse
- 2% Allowed Access by a sexual registered sexual Offender
- 1% Mental Injury
- 1% Allowed Access to Obscene materials

FY21 Boone & Story County Analysis
Of the total number of abused or neglected children:

- 40% were 5 years of age or younger
- 30% were between ages 6 to 10 years
- 30% were between ages 11 to 17 Years

Data Source: Iowa department of Human Services

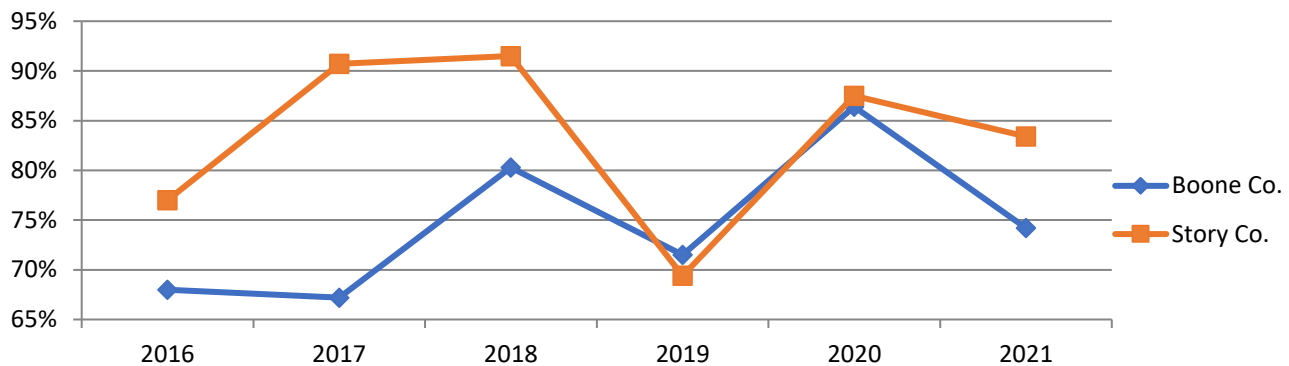
Notation: 2020 was an unprecedented year in Iowa due to the Pandemic beginning March 2020 through 2021. (Acknowledgement: 4RKids Area Director Debra Schrader who shared state Child Abuse information).

Healthy Children

-2 Y.O. children Immunization Rates – Graph

Results Area	Priority	Rationale for Identification or Deletion of Priority
Healthy Children	Enhance supports for the physical, emotional, and social developmental health of all children	The first five years of life are crucial for all young children, laying the developmental foundation for children’s lives. The Board will work with community partners to support resources in the ECI Area that benefit child development issues and help all children be prepared to enter school ready to learn.

2 Y.O. Children Immunization Rates



Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

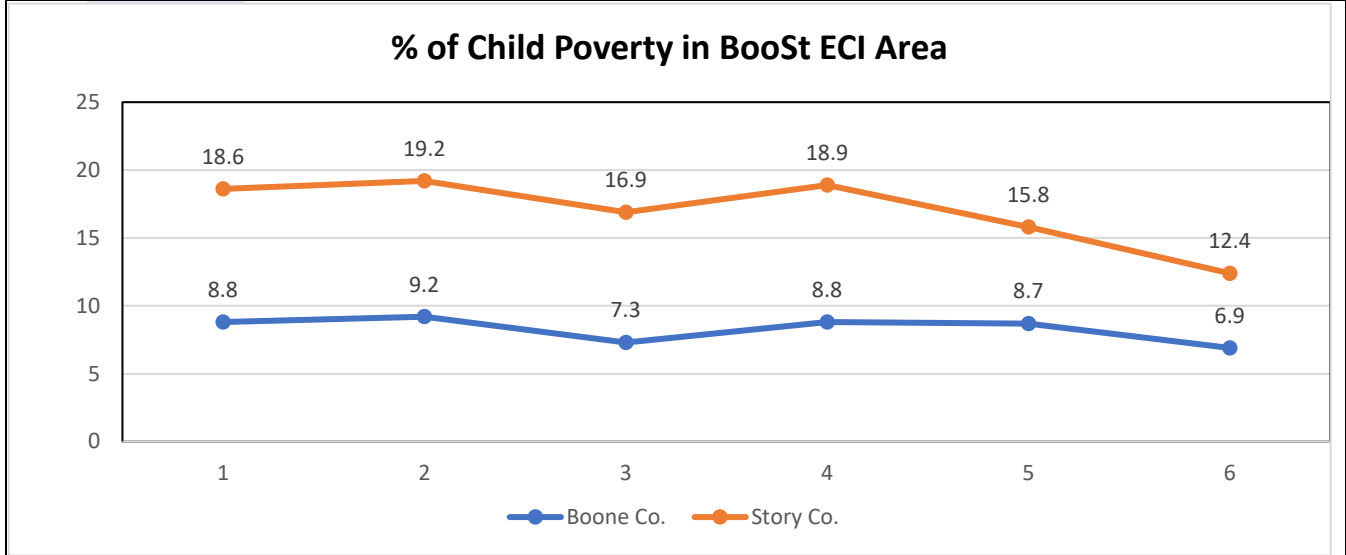
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Boone Co.	68%	67%	80%	72%	86%	74%
Story Co.	77%	91%	92%	69%	88%	83%

Indicator analysis and discussion: There is a lot of misinformation on the internet about vaccinations leading some parents to not have their children immunized. This was very problematic locally where people travel to ISU from all over the world. There was a long gradual decline in immunization rates and IDPH has seen an increase in measles cases in Iowa. The Pandemic increased the need for vaccination. Because childcare settings bring children together they need to be especially vigilant about making sure that the children they enroll are fully immunized.

Secure & Supportive Communities

-% of Children 5 and Younger in Poverty – Graph

Results Area	Priority	Rationale for Identification or Deletion of Priority
Secure and Supportive Communities	Engage and collaborate with diverse community partners to strengthen the Early Childhood system	Collaboration with community partners is necessary to enhance and expand the early childhood system. The Board will build support for early childhood issues through community outreach.



Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boone Co.	8.8%	9.2%	7.3%	8.8%	8.7%	6.9%
Story Co.	18.6%	19.2%	16.9%	18.5%	15.8%	12.4%

Indicator analysis and discussion: Iowa along, with the entire country, has seen general economic conditions improve. However, much like the earlier discussion regarding child abuse, participants found it difficult to recommend policy and programmatic changes based on such a broad indicator as poverty. A more useful indicator may be to look at access to high quality care by children from low income families. There also may be merit in identifying low income areas and targeting support to providers in those areas.

FY 2022 Preschool Mapping

Boone County

<i>Preschool & Address</i>	<i>Non-Profit</i>	<i># Kids Served</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Service Time Frame</i>	<i>Curriculum Utilized</i>	<i>Assessment Utilized</i>	<i>Quality Effort</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Faith Based</i>
Tiger Tots Preschool 613 W. North St. Madrid IA 50156 515-795-3359	X	60	18 months to 12 Years Works with Special needs	Center Hours: 6:00 – 6:00 M-F	Creative Curriculum	GOLD	QRS-4	Parent ECI DES	
Trinity Lutheran Preschool 712 12 th St. Boone, IA 50036 515-432-6912	X	64	3 -5 Years Works with Special needs	Pre-School: Before & After School Care: 7-5:30 M-F	Creative Curriculum, Second Step, Foundations, Path to Literacy & Concordia Voyage	Gold	QPPS w/ BCS Partners. QRS-4. DHS License	Parent ECI DES Private Donations	X
United Community ELC 1284 U Ave Boone, IA 50036 515-432-5319	X	88	3-4 Years Works with Special Needs	Pre-School: Before & After School Care. 6:45-6 M-F	Creative Curriculum	Gold IGDIs	QPPS	Parents ECI DES School District op.	

Story County

<i>Preschool & Address</i>	<i>Non-Profit</i>	<i># Kids Served</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Service Time Frame</i>	<i>Curriculum Utilized</i>	<i>Assessment Utilized</i>	<i>Quality Effort</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Faith Based</i>
Colo Nesco: Lil Royals 919 West St. Colo, IA 50056 641-487-7411	X	38	3-4 Years	School: 8-3:30 M-F	Creative Curriculum Launch Pad Every day Math	Heggerty & Gold	QPPS	Parents ECI DES School District Operated	
Iowa State University Vet Med. 1520 Christensen Dr. Ames, IA 50010 515-294-2273		76	6 weeks - 5 Years	7-6 M-F	Creative Curriculum for Preschool	Teaching Strategies Gold	NAEYC QRS-5	Parents ECI DES	
St. Paul Lutheran Preschool 610 15 th St. Ames, IA 50010 515-233-1914	X	75	2-5 Years	8:30-3:15 M-F	Creative Curriculum	Gold	QRS-4 State license	Parents ECI Private	X
University Community CC 2623 Bruner Dr. Ames IA, 50010 515-291-1694		89	6 weeks - 11 Years	7-5:30 M-F	Creative Curriculum for Preschool	Teaching Strategies Gold	NAEYC QRS-5	Parents ECI	

Community-wide Indicators of the ECI Area Board

Indicator	Rationale for Selection of Indicator
Immunized Children (Rate of children immunized up to date by 24 months)	Twenty-four-month childhood immunization rate was selected as an indicator to track due to the need to maintain safe child care environments.
Pre-literacy Skills (No. and percent children meeting expectations as measured by developmental assessments)	PreK literacy assessment data was selected due to the high correlation between reading ability and school success. (Examples of assessment tools include Gold, IGDI, and FAST). Track third grade reading scores by school district to see how it correlates to the kindergarten FAST.
Affordable Quality Early Learning Environments	The number of independently evaluated centers, preschools and development homes was selected because studies show that the quality of care is an important variable regarding the lasting impact of early care and education. The number of Child Care Assistance recipients in quality care will also be tracked.
Child Abuse (Rate of child abuse for children 0 to 5)	The BooSt Board will work to identify a different measure that is more closely tied to family support services funded by BooSt.
Children in Poverty (Percent of children 0 to 5 who live below the poverty level)	Children in poverty will continue to be followed as a global indicator but a different indicator will be identified that is more closely linked to outcomes for children and families served by BooSt funded programs.

Strategies of the ECI Area Board

Children Ready to Succeed: All children have access to quality early learning opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support affordable early education through tuition assistance. 2. Work with local child care providers and preschools to expand the use of formative assessments to guide teaching and early learning.
Secure and Nurturing Environments: Well-trained caregivers promote the development of the whole child	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support early childhood provider training. 2. Support quality improvement through nurse and childcare consultants. 3. Provide incentives for quality improvement related to registration, training, quality improvement, and accreditation.
Healthy Children: Improved physical, emotional, and social developmental health of all children ages birth to five	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote developmental screening and referral to early intervention services. 2. Nurse Consultants work with childcare providers to share information about the importance of immunizations and monitor records. 3. Nurse Consultants help providers develop health care plans for children with special needs and provide universal precautions and medication administration trainings.
Secure and Nurturing Families: Support the development of nurturing bonds and healthy parent/child relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support healthy relationships between families and children through home visiting services. 2. Provide emergency childcare during times of crisis. 3. Work with 211 to improve information and referral services for families.
Secure and Supportive Communities: Engage and collaborate with diverse community partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide information and referral for families of children, prenatal to age five, for additional supports. 2. Collaborate and partner with other services and agencies to promote early childhood services. 3. Support early care and education settings that serve more families with low incomes.

Section III

Fiscal Assessment

The Fiscal Assessment focused on identified childcare shortages, especially infant care. There is also concern with the decline in child care home providers. Reviewing stories from around the country shows that childcare shortages are being experienced in other states (US News 9/8/18). Ironically the problem seems to have been made worse by low unemployment.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program: Childcare settings have seen unintended effects of the growth of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) for four-year-old children. As more children have switched from private preschools and childcare settings to the free SWVPP childcare, providers have to draw a greater percentage of their revenue from younger children. This is especially true for infant care where higher staffing ratios required.

The SWVPP is not means tested; parents who had been willing to pay private providers for preschool now receive it for free. The SWVPP is often located in a separate location from the childcare setting. This requires parents to arrange for transportation from the preschool to childcare. For many families they are not able to take time away from work in the middle of the day to provide transportation. It is easier for these parents to leave their child in childcare. This is demonstrated by data on the Iowa Department of Education website that shows that a lower percent of children eligible for free and reduced lunches attend SWVPP when compared to the percent in regular education.

Childcare Assistance (CCA): Compared to other Iowa counties, parents in this ECI Area use the CCA program at a significantly lower rate. Increasing the use of CCA by 20% would generate \$300,000 in state funding. While the CCA rate is less than the market rate, it can be increased when programs achieve the highest quality levels. In 2017 only 3% of area children receiving CCA were in high quality settings (CCRR 2018).

One would think that with a shrinking number of childcare providers that providers would be seeing their pay increase. This is not so, childcare is labor intensive and much of the efficiencies seen in other industries has been due to automation. The high cost and lack of available childcare has impacts beyond parents, the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation has released a report about the need for businesses to get involved. (The Workforce of Today, the Workforce of Tomorrow, US CC Foundation)

BooSt ECI Area Board's Process for Awarding Funds

The BooSt ECI Area uses a competitive bid process to identify qualified providers to financial support programming and services that address early childhood priorities in the community plan. Policies and procedures are in place to do multi-year contracts. Board priorities for funding will be evaluated at least annually, which will guide decisions regarding the bid process. An appeal process regarding the Board's decisions for awarding funds is included with the application

Section IV

Community Collaboration

The ECI Area Board strives to develop an organizational structure and business practices that will ensure open communication between families, contracted service providers, community stakeholders, and board members. The ECI Area board will strive to include work groups or committees that enhance communication and collaboration efforts within the ECI Area. Community planning partners and efforts include, but are not limited, to the following:

Boards of Supervisors in both Boone County and Story County have demonstrated consistent support for local Early Childhood Iowa Area efforts. Representatives of the Boards of Supervisors serve on the local board, and the counties ensure that fiscal agent services and employer of records services are provided for the ECI Area.

Child Abuse Prevention Council - Boone and Story County CARES is the Child Abuse Prevention Council for Boone and Story County. CARES offer supports and services throughout the ECI Area to address Child Abuse Prevention. The services and supports offered include Parent Education classes and classes for parents going through a divorce.

Children's Well-being Community Collaborative - The BooSt ECI Area has participated in this grant awarded to YSS in Ames. The goal of the grant is to pull together representatives from a six-county region in central Iowa to identify how we can collaborate to develop a more integrated system of care to address the mental health needs of young children.

Community Resources Guides - Boone and Story Counties have directories of resources, supports, and services available for families. A part of the work of the Community Collaboration grant is focused on how to coordinate and organize information about local resources. We are currently working with Iowa 211 to develop local partners who will work with 211 to make sure that local resources are current and accurate. Story County United Way has taken a lead role and completed the 211 Program for Central Iowa.

Community Solutions to Childcare Shortages – this project was developed by the Iowa Women's Foundation. BooSt ECI Area began working with the IWF in June of 2018. Workgroups of childcare professionals, businesses and community stakeholders are working to reduce CC shortages.

DE categorization Projects (DCAT) - There are two DCAT Projects in the BooSt ECI Area, each with its own Governance Board. Boone and Dallas Counties are one DCAT Cluster, and Story County is a separate DCAT Cluster. DCAT focuses on meeting the needs of at-risk children 0 to 18 years of age, in particular those children and families that may be involved with, or at risk for involvement with, either the Department of Human Services Child Welfare system or the Juvenile Court Services system. The DCAT Clusters oversee the Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC).

Heartland Area Education Agency 11 is a partner with the BooSt ECI Area in working with local schools and early education providers to provide educational services, programs, and resources for improving the learning outcomes and wellbeing of children.

Homeless Resources – The homeless shelter in Story County serves both counties. Their services include shelters for families and women and transitional living.

Human Services Councils - Both counties in the BooSt ECI Area have Human Services Councils in place. The ECI Area staff participates in the meetings of these councils as a means to network with other community providers, and to share information and updates regarding ECI.

Iowa Integrated Data System for Decision Making (I2D2) - BooSt staff have been engaged in the work of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System project of ECI. The project is able to collect and analyze the data gathered by multiple service providers and provide data on which programs are having the most impact in children being able to succeed in school.

Iowa State University Extension - provides education and information for Boone and Story counties in central Iowa. ISU Extension provides training and supports for human service and citizen endeavors.

SAFE (Substance Abuse Free Environments) was established in Boone County in 1991 as a coalition invested in the safety and wellbeing of the people of the community focused on increasing awareness of and prevention of substance abuse and related problems.

Story County Analysis of Social Services and Evaluation Team (ASSET) - ASSET is a planning and funding system in Story County. ASSET is a collaborative effort of the City of Ames, Story County, United Way of Story County, Iowa State University's Student Government, and Central Iowa Community Services. To enhance collaborative planning, ECI Area updates will be provided at ASSET meetings as requested regarding funding priorities and funding allocation decisions of the ECI Area Board. There will also be reciprocal sharing of referrals of programs/services to consider for funding support, and requests for detail on funds allocated through either the ECI Area or the ASSET process during funding application processes. Community plan and ECI Area priorities updates will be shared with the ASSET Board annually.

Ames Chamber of Commerce – The BooSt ECI Area joined the chamber in order to explore ways to collaborate with local businesses on finding ways to address the needs of families with young children that impact businesses such as the need for childcare.

Story County Quality of Life Alliance - This is a Story County based initiative of various stakeholders that have partnered to conduct countywide community needs assessments since 2000. Representatives in this process have included United Way of Story County, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Iowa State University, Lutheran Services in Iowa, YSS, Mid Iowa Community Action, Story County Community Services, MGMC Home Health Services/Story County Public Health, and BooSt Together for Children. Results of the latest assessment were released in 2020. Community Plan updates and ECI Area priorities will be included in the ongoing efforts of this community planning collaborative.

Story County Juvenile Justice Committee - This lunch and learn series is coordinated by YSS and Lutheran Services in Iowa for Story County community service providers with an interest in issues affecting children and youth through age 18 years meet. The group meets monthly to hear educational presentations on relevant topics and to network.

United Way - There are two United Way organizations in the BooSt ECI Area, United Way of Boone County and United Way of Story County. Each organization is a source of funding and community planning and leadership. Funds through the local United Way organizations are primarily targeted to support various human services related programs and services.

Section V

Review and Evaluation

Review and Evaluation Methods: The BooSt ECI Area uses the following review and evaluation methods to monitor effectiveness of the community plan, the board, staff and funded programs and services:

Annual Community Plan Review - Members of the BooSt ECI Area Board review the community plan on an annual basis. This review includes analysis of updated data and updated community assessments that may impact the early childhood system.

Site Visits - Designated ECI Area staff will conduct at least an annual site visit with funded programs and services contractors. A standard site visit monitoring tool shall be used for site visits, and information gathered during site visits will be compiled for review by the ECI Area Board.

Progress Reports - Quarterly progress reports and DAISEY reports are used to gather data and program updates from funded program/service providers. ECI staff summarizes progress report information for review by the ECI Area Board. Progress reports gathered at the end of the fourth quarter will be used to provide required program performance measures data in the ECI Area annual report, which is due to the State ECI Office on or before September 15 of the close of each fiscal year.

Program/Service Presentations - The BooSt ECI Area Board invites contractors to provide updates regarding their programs during board meetings.

Meeting Evaluations - The BooSt ECI Area Board will periodically review its meetings to assess issues related to the process of meetings. Board officers and designated staff will review feedback to make changes for future meetings.

Annual Evaluation - The BooSt ECI Area Board will implement an annual self-evaluation using board evaluation tools provided online. In addition, community partners and funded program/service providers will be asked annually to evaluate the ECI Area initiative activities and Board function. A board committee will review board self-evaluations, and community partner and provider evaluations, and develop an improvement plan based upon the assessment results which shall encompass a board professional development plan.

ECI Area Staff Evaluations - The BooSt ECI Area Board will implement an annual evaluation of staff members using the performance evaluation formatted through ECI. In addition, community partners and funded program/service providers will be asked annually to provide input on the effectiveness of ECI Area staff in accomplishing expected roles and responsibilities. A board committee will review performance evaluation information and develop staff improvement plan