



### **What are the Iowa Early Learning Standards?**

The Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) describe what young children should know and be able to do throughout the first five years of life. The standards are organized in seven content areas that reflect the skills children need to develop to be ready for kindergarten:

- Physical well-being and motor development;
- Approaches to learning;
- Social and emotional development;
- Communication, language, and literacy;
- Mathematics and science;
- Creative arts; and
- Social studies.

### **Why are the Iowa Early Learning Standards important?**

From the moment of birth until a child enters kindergarten, there are approximately 2000 days. Research shows these 2000 days involve the most extraordinary and critical period of growth and development in a child's lifetime. When adults know what young children should be learning, they can create environments and provide experiences that support and nurture optimum physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development. The Iowa Early Learning Standards serve as a touch-point for developing and providing a variety of daily experiences in safe, nurturing, and stimulating environments that give *each* child the opportunity to succeed.



### **Who can use the Iowa Early Learning Standards?**

The Iowa Early Learning Standards are for everyone who loves, cares for, and educates young children:

- Families;
- Early Care and Education, Health, and Family Support Professionals;
- Instructors;
- Consultants;
- Legislators;
- Policymakers; and
- Community Members.



**“Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.”**

### **What is the history of the Iowa Early Learning Standards?**

The Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) were first developed in 2006 in response to the federal requirements of the Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative. The 2012 revision of the Iowa Early Learning Standards was included as a priority in the Head Start Early Childhood Advisory Council federal grant, received by Iowa through the Early Childhood Iowa Office at the Iowa Department of Management. In 2011, a subcontract to facilitate this revision and other professional development work was granted to the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (Iowa AEYC). To make the review process happen, a widely diverse group of over fifty stakeholders across early learning, family support, health, and special needs was invited to be part of the planning, review, and revision writing team.

**For a copy of the Iowa Early Learning Standards:**

[http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/EC\\_resources/early\\_learning\\_standards.html](http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/EC_resources/early_learning_standards.html)

### **Who is Early Childhood Iowa?**

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) is an alliance of stakeholders that includes all professionals in early care, health, and education roles serving children birth through age five in Iowa. The initiative's purpose is to be a catalyst for the continued development of a comprehensive, integrated early care, health, and education system. Recognizing the critical importance of the early years, ECI seeks to work, at both the state and local levels, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided to young children and their families. Early Childhood Iowa formally adopted the revised Iowa Early Learning Standards in January 2013 and encourages all those who work with, care for, and educate young children and their families to use the standards in their settings.

**For more information, contact:**

Iowa AEYC

[info@iowaaeyc.org](mailto:info@iowaaeyc.org)



### **What is different in the 2012 revision of the Iowa Early Learning Standards?**

The goal of the IELS Review Committee was to review and revise, as needed, the 2006 standards. Content and formatting changes in the 2012 Iowa Early Learning Standards are described below:

- A seventh content area, social studies, was added to describe the role of family, community, and culture in children's lives;
- Recent research has been added to the rationale for each standard;
- Research and resources used within the rationale are listed at the end of each standard;
- The role of a child's home language has been added to the communication, language, and literacy content area and additional benchmarks for preschool English language learners have been defined;
- To be inclusive of all those caring for, working with, or educating young children, the term "caregiver" has been changed to "adult";
- Additional examples of benchmarks and adult supports have been included to demonstrate the various settings and adults that children will interact with; and
- An alignment between the IELS and the Kindergarten to 12th Grade Iowa Core has been included to show that the knowledge and skills gained in the first five years prepares children for school.