



TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

March 11, 2016

Akeiisa Coleman, Senior Policy Analyst
National Governor's Association
acoleman@nga.org

Dear Ms. Coleman:

I am pleased to designate the Iowa Department of Management, Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Office to lead the work of the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practice Learning Lab "Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration to Address the Health and Success of Children and Families." The ECI Office provides leadership for facilitation, communication, and coordination for the early childhood Iowa initiative activities and funding and for improvement of the early care, education, health, and human services systems.

Iowa's Learning Lab will work to align oversight, policies and practices of and establish a stable, budget neutral funding for the Child Care Nurse Consultation Program.

The Learning Collaborative will assist this team of senior state officials to identify and implement best practices in a focused aspect of maternal and child health care. The team shall include:

Name and Position	Representation	Reason for Participation
Nic Pottebaum, Health Care Policy Advisor	Governor's Office	Supports the Governor's Goal of "Best Schools in the Nation" by supporting safe and nurturing early learning environments as a path to school success.
Marcus Johnson-Miller, Chief, Bureau of Family Health Heidi Hotvedt, Healthy Child Care Iowa Program Coordinator	Department of Public Health	Department responsible for Title V Maternal and Child Health grantees and Healthy Child Care Iowa which supports and provides quality assurance for the Child Care Nurse Consultation program.
Chad Dahm, Chief, Bureau for Child Care and Community Services Mykala Robinson, Child Care Quality Program Manager	Department of Human Services	Department responsible for child care regulations, the child care Quality Rating System and the administration of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.
Mary Delagardelle, Associate Division Administrator, Division of Learning and Results	Department of Education	Department responsible for policies and implementation of the State Wide Voluntary Preschool program, federal Part B and Part C special education programs and the Early Childhood Positive Behaviors Intervention and Supports program.

Jeffrey Anderson, ECI Stakeholder Alliance/Advisory Council Facilitator	Department of Management	Department responsible for the allocation of funds and guidance to the Early Childhood Iowa area boards who are the primary funders of Child Care Nurse Consultation services.
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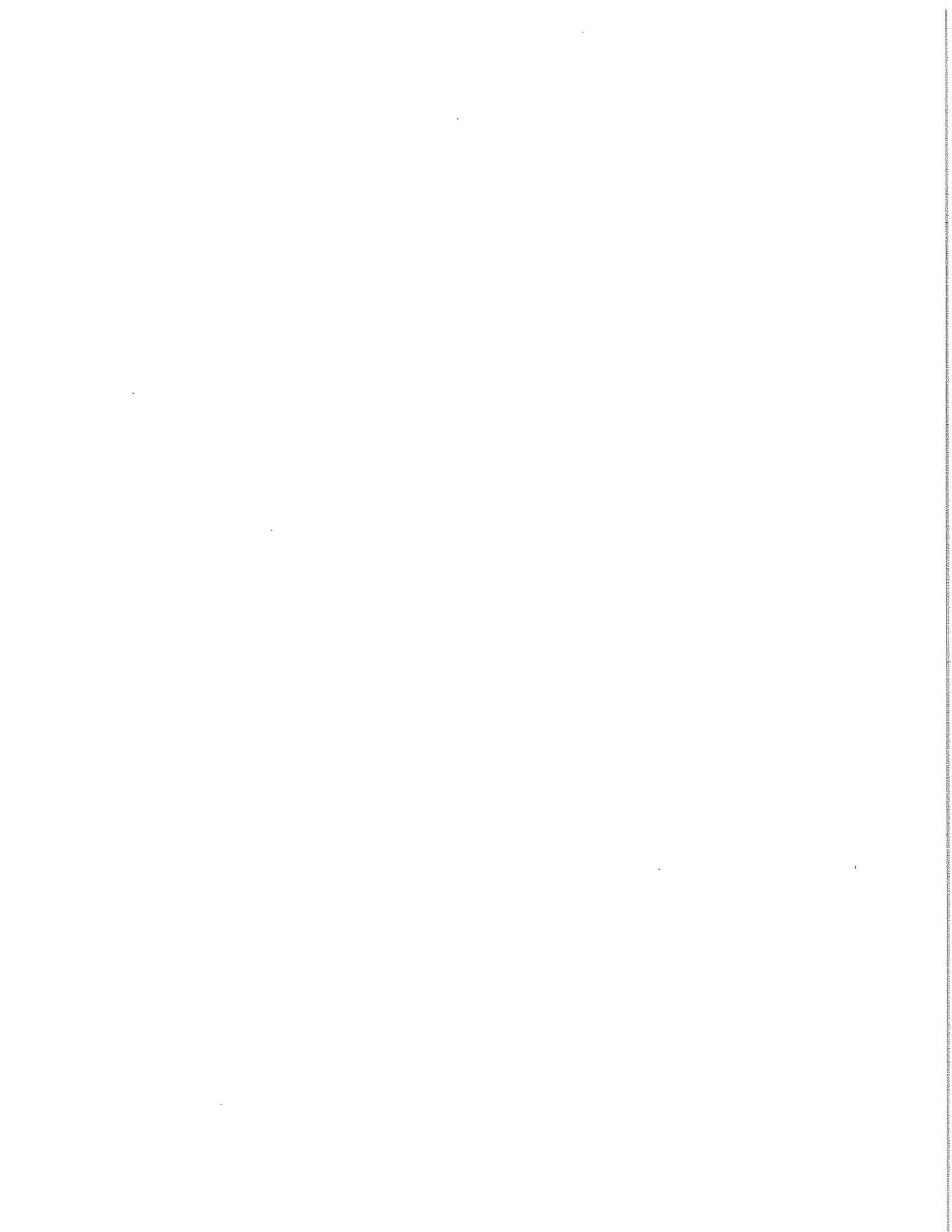
I am appointing Jeffrey Anderson, ECI Stakeholder Alliance/Advisory Council Facilitator, to lead the work of this team.

This initiative supports my goal for "Best Schools in the Nation" by ensuring that the safe and nurturing early learning environments, such as those provided by child care providers, ensure a clear, safe, productive path to school success for our youngest learners. Additionally, the benefits derived from a more effective collaboration among state agencies will ensure that the state's efforts to support child care providers will be most effective and efficient.

Sincerely,



Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa



Iowa Application for:

NGA Center for Best Practices Learning Lab

“Fostering Cross-Sector Collaborations to Address the Health and Success of Children and Families”

Applicant: Governor Terry E. Branstad, Iowa

Team Leader: For questions or clarifications

Jeffrey Anderson

Early Childhood Iowa Office

Iowa Department of Management

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Description of current challenges

Child Care Nurse Consultation is an evidence-based practice that positively impacts child health outcomes and the quality of child care programs. Child Care Nurse Consultants or CCNCs work with local child care providers to improve environmental health and safety, improve access for children with special health needs by assisting with care planning, assist with the Iowa Quality Rating System, and provide training and onsite consultation.

Beginning in 2006, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) began a Quality Rating System (QRS) for child care programs across the state. The QRS was designed to improve the quality of child care programs above the state licensing standards through a rating system to better inform the public the quality of the programs as they made decisions about choosing child care.

A hallmark of the improvement process was, and is, to improve the health and safety of children in child care environments. A key vehicle for this improvement at the program is through Child Care Nurse Consultation program. The development of the CCNC program was initially partnership effort between the Departments of Public Health (IDPH) and Human Services.

The CCNC program will also be instrumental in developing and delivering the new federally mandated health and safety training for all child care programs, particularly those serving children on the child care assistance (subsidy) program.

The desired result of this work is for children to be healthy and ready to enter school. CCNCs play a vital role in creating safe, healthy, and inclusive environments for children in care. Currently, 76% of Iowa’s children under age 6 live in homes where all parents are in the work

force (highest in the nation), indicating a high number of children potentially needing care. (U.S. Census, 2008-2014 American Community Survey)

Where CCNC services are available there is evidence of success in improving child care environments and in supporting inclusive care of children with special health needs:

- Of the 1,411 programs with a CCNC visit, 98% completed an initial health and safety assessment;
- Of the 1,394 programs using the CCNC assessment and improvement process, 89% showed improvement in health and safety in the program and;
- 701 children in the participating programs were identified with special health needs. Of those children, 586 or 84% of those children had a special needs health care plan in place to increase the likelihood of continuing of care in the same program.

However, in SFY 2015, only 27% of the DHS regulated child care centers (48%) and child care homes (19%) receive child care nurse consultant services (2016 Early Childhood Iowa Annual Report) and only 76 of the 99 counties have access to CCNC services.

Today, multiple state departments, along with local funding from Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) areas and other sources, support the system each with their externally or internally driven priorities, policies and accountability measures.

All the CCNC program partners have the goal to create healthy, safe and inclusive early learning environments for children. The challenge is to increase cross-agency collaboration and reduce barriers to achieve the goal. In particular the challenges are:

- Creating a coordinated governance structure and communication between the partners;
- Aligning policies and practices among the partners to increase consistency, efficiency and joint accountability while avoiding duplication of service;
- Identifying strategies for CCNCs to assist with referrals related to early childhood mental health services, such as Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS), mental health consultation, or others strategies to ensure these children are in quality child care environments and;
- Creating a sustainable, state-wide system through an efficient use of budget neutral funding streams.

Description of Current work across the departments and agencies to address social determinants of health and success.

Currently, several state departments are involved in supporting the CCNC program. Some are at the policy level, some providing consultant certification, quality assurance, service delivery and some as funders.

The Departments of public health, human services, education and management (Early Childhood Iowa) work in partnership to ensure Iowa's vision, "Every child beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful." The CCNC program is also a "front-end" approach for the Healthiest State Initiative. They collaboratively work together on the common goal to have all young children in care participating in quality, safe, healthy and nurturing child care or early learning environments. The partner departments are also engage with the State Child Care Advisory Committee, the Quality Rating System Oversight Committee, and the Iowa Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECI Stakeholders Alliance) where common goals/outcomes are shared, input on policy is provided, and challenges are addressed, although not always in concert.

Below is a description of each of the partner's contribution to the CCNC program:

- The Department of Public Health through the Healthy Child Care Iowa program provides technical support, training and leadership to local Child Care Nurse Consultants (CCNCs) statewide, with funding from the Department of Human Services.
- Title V Maternal and Child Health agencies provide oversight and leadership for local CCNC programs by hiring, subcontracting or collaborating with community partners for service delivery, but rely on outside sources for funding the positions.
- The Department of Human Services administers the QRS program, which for certain requirements, depend on CCNC's to support child care programs. However, DHS also provides funding for local child care (non-nurse) consultants through the child care resource and referral system; creating at times inconsistent guidance and in turn confusion for providers seeking to improve their environments.
- The Department of Management's Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Office allocates state funds and provides guidance to the 38 local ECI area boards to support the following statewide desired results across Iowa's 99 counties:
 - Healthy Children;
 - Children Ready to Succeed in School;
 - Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments;
 - Safe and Nurturing Families;
 - Safe and Supportive Communities;

Most of the CCNC positions are funded by 31 of 38 local Early Childhood Iowa areas to support secure and nurturing early childhood environments.

Each ECI area completes its own needs assessment, determines priorities and creates a community plan to guide local funding decisions. While local decision making is valued, it creates inconsistent funding and conditions for the funding, while at the same time not fully funding a CCNC system across all 99 counties. (\$1.2M)

- The Department of Education provides quality assurance for implementing the Early Childhood Positive Behavior s Intervention and Support program. CCNC’s make referrals to this program when they determine a child care program needs some assistance in developing supports for children who have behavioral issues. However, improved coordination would be helpful to create consistent messages for the child care providers.
- Other funding sources include local public health, health organizations, Head Start/Early Head Start, United Way, and other community partners. As with the ECI funding, it is not statewide and can have conditions for the funds. (\$72K)

Describe the preliminary goals and expected outcomes.

The preliminary Goals for the Action Plan work include:

Goal: Align oversight, policies and practices of the Child Care Nurse Consultation Program.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Develop consistency between Child Care Nurse Consultation, DHS Child Care Licensing Consultation, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, and Child Care Resource and Referral consultation guidance
2. Develop a plan for statewide coverage to fully support the child care Quality Rating System and for ensuring inclusive child care for children with special health needs.

Goal: Establish stable, budget neutral funding for the Child Care Nurse Consultation Program.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Identify funding strategies to stabilize funding for Child Care Nurse Consultation services

Learning Lab Team

The anticipated cross-agency core team will include representatives from the Governor’s Office, and the departments responsible for education, public health, human services and management. All have a vested interest in achieving these common and agreed to goals for Child Care Nurse Consultation as outlined in the Blueprint for Action from the Healthy Child Care America campaign:

1. Safe, healthy child care environments for all children, including those with special health needs.
2. Up-to-date and easily accessible immunizations for children in child care.
3. Access to quality health, oral health, and developmental screening and comprehensive follow-up for children in child care.
4. Health and mental health consultation, support, and education for all families, children and child care providers.
5. Health, nutrition, and safety education for children in child care, their families and child care providers.

Core Team Membership:

Name and Position	Representation	Reason for Participation
Nic Pottebaum, Health Policy Advisor	Governor's Office	Supports the Governor's Goal of "Best Schools in the Nation" by supporting safe and nurturing early learning environments as a path to school success.
Marcus Johnson-Miller, Chief, Bureau of Family Health	Department of Public Health	Department responsible for Title V Maternal and Child Health grantees and Healthy Child Care Iowa which supports and provides quality assurance for the Child Care Nurse Consultation program.
Chad Dahm, Chief, Bureau for Child Care and Community Services	Department of Human Services	Department responsible for child care regulations, the child care Quality Rating System and the administration of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.
Mary Delagardelle, Associate Division Administrator, Division of Learning and Results	Department of Education	Department responsible for policies and implementation of the State Wide Voluntary Preschool program, federal Part B and Part C special education programs and the Early Childhood Positive Behaviors Intervention and Supports program.
Jeffrey Anderson, Facilitator, ECI Stakeholder Alliance/Early Childhood Advisory Council	Department of Management	Department responsible for the allocation of funds and guidance to the Early Childhood Iowa area boards who are the primary funders of Child Care Nurse Consultation services.

To help create and implement the Action Plan the following individuals and groups will be involved in an advisory capacity through small group work, focus groups and writing/implementation teams:

- Heidi Hotvedt, Healthy Child Care Iowa Program Coordinator
- Mykala Robinson, Child Care Quality Program Manager
- Shanell Wagler, Administrator, Early Childhood Iowa Office
- Maternal and Child Health grantees
- State Child Care Advisory Committee
- Early Childhood PBIS State Leadership Team
- Early Childhood Iowa State Board
- Early Childhood Iowa cross-agency Technical Assistance Team
- Representatives of Early Childhood Iowa area boards
- Department of Education Early Learning Team