



Advocating for Iowa's kids
An initiative of the Child and Family Policy Center

Every Child Counts 2012 Legislative Priorities

Through research and advocacy, Every Child Counts seeks to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Iowa children and their families on issues related to early care and education, child health and well-being and family economic success. The following are specific areas where Every Child Counts, supported by CFPC's research and communications divisions, will be seeking to inform and influence state policy and investment.

Quality Early Care and Education

- Improve overall monitoring and quality-improvement activities for early-care and education programs
- Ensure children birth to age eight have the supports and strong educational environments needed to read proficiently by third grade
- Strengthen the availability of evidence-based preschool programs for low-income children and support targeted outreach efforts to assure their participation
- Continue to build evidence-based home-visiting and parent-education programs within Early Childhood Iowa

Child Health and Well-Being

- Implement comprehensive child health provisions under state and federal health reform
- Continue to develop and expand programs that improve child health preventive and developmental practice, such as 1st Five and Project LAUNCH
- Expand access to children's oral, mental, behavioral and nutritional health care
- Improve child safety and well-being through youth, family and community involvement in child safety, permanence and well-being efforts

Child and Family Economic Success

- Increase access to the child care assistance program by raising the eligibility level and increasing provider reimbursement rates
- Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit to at least 20 percent of the federal credit (up from the current 7 percent)
- Strengthen workforce development opportunities for low-income working families

How are Iowa kids faring?

Data from 2010 Iowa Kids Count

	2000	2010	Change
Child Abuse and Neglect	12.9	17.3	33.8%
Confirmed cases of abuse or neglect per 1,000 children age 0-17			
4th Grade Reading Proficiency*	76.5%	78.5%	2.7%
Students proficient in 4th grade reading on the ITBS and Iowa Alternate Assessment (2003)			
8th Grade Mathematics Proficiency*	71.7%	76.5%	6.7%
Students proficient in 8th grade math on the ITBS and Iowa Alternate Assessment (2003)			
High School Graduation	88.7%	89.4%	0.7%
Public school students entering ninth grade who graduate with their class four years later			
Food Assistance	4.3%	11.4%	167.6%
Average percentage of individuals receiving financial assistance for food			
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility	26.5%	36.8%	39.3%
Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches			
Prenatal Care	71.2%	75.5%	6.0%
Live births where the mother began prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy (2007)			
Low Birthweight	6.1%	7.0%	13.8%
Live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds			
Teen Unmarried Births	8.4%	7.1%	-15.7%
Live births to unmarried teens			
Child Poverty	10.8%	15.6%	44.5%
Children age 0-17 who lived below poverty level (2009)			
Unemployment	2.6%	6.1%	137.3%
Individuals 16 and over who were in the labor force but unemployed			
Single-Parent Families	24.9%	30.6%	22.8%
Families with children headed by a single parent			

* ITBS scores do not allow for national comparison. Iowa's fourth-grade reading and eight-grade math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), given in all 50 states, remained flat between 1992 and 2009. Because other states made significant gains, Iowa's national rankings dropped: its rank on fourth-grade reading, for example, fell from 5th to 26th place.

For data on each of Iowa's 99 counties, visit www.cfpciowa.org and click on the Iowa Kids Count icon.