

# Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start/Early Head Start Programs 2023 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Agency Overview**

Community Action of Southeast Iowa offers services in Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa counties in Iowa. We have been in operation since 1964 in southeast Iowa providing support and meeting needs in our communities. We are proud to be a part of the Community Action network in Iowa. Beyond Early Head Start and Head Start, Community Action of Southeast Iowa offers comprehensive services focused in three areas: Education, Nutrition and Housing. We have 120 employees who share and accomplish our mission every day in 20+ programs and services.

Our mission: Community Action of Southeast Iowa is dedicated to alleviating the conditions and causes of poverty by building partnerships and strengthening people through quality services. Our vision is for people in Southeast Iowa to have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.

Contact us at our Central Office, 2850 Mt Pleasant St, Suite 108, Burlington, IA 52601 319-753-0193. Find out more about us on our website: <https://caofseia.org/>

## **Head Start and Early Head Start Program Summary**

The Head Start (HS) program is funded for 264 children and the Early Head Start (EHS) program is funded for 70 children. Children are served through center-based classrooms located in Des Moines County, Henry County, and Lee County. Children ages 3-5 years are served through one of two center-based, school year program options for Head Start Preschool: part day or duration. Children in a part day classroom attend classes four days per week for 3.5 hours each day. Children in a duration classroom attend five days a week for 6.5 hours per day. The Early Head Start program is a center-based, full day, full year program for children ages 0-3 years, as well as prenatal families.

The Head Start program no longer has full day classrooms due to the loss of state Shared Visions funding just prior to the 2019-2020 school year. In 2020, six dual/part day classrooms were converted to duration classrooms. The Head Start program previously received funding from Early Childhood Iowa to assist with transportation in Des Moines County, Henry County, and Lee County. However, that funding ended in Henry and Lee Counties in 2020 and in Des Moines County in 2022, so the program is no longer able to provide transportation.

Our current break down of funded slots, program type, and location is shown below.

	Des Moines County	Henry County	North Lee County	South Lee County	Louisa County	Total Slots
Total Head Start (HS) Slots:	124	32	46	62	0	<b>264</b>
HS Part Day	76	0	30	0	0	106
HS Duration	48	32	16	62	0	158
Total Early Head Start (EHS) Slots:	34	12	8	16	0	<b>70</b>
<b>Total Slots by Site:</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>334</b>

Additionally, we maintain a waitlist for pregnant individuals, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Our waitlist numbers have been decreasing for Head Start slots program wide, however our waitlists for Early Head Start have remained the same or increased. Our previous assessments have noted we should look at converting Head Start to Early Head Start slots at several locations.

Our mission: Head Start and Early Head Start are programs where children and families are educated, challenged and empowered to embrace their potential for success in life. One child, one family at a time.

### **Summary of the Community Assessment Purpose & Process**

Federal Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.11, section b, *community wide strategic planning and needs assessment (community assessment)*, states that each Head Start and Early Head Start grantee agency must conduct a comprehensive community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period. Information gathered through the community assessment process is used to guide the Head Start grantee in determining its philosophy, program objectives, and the design of its service delivery systems.

The process of assessing the needs of Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start/Early Head Start service area was completed during the 2022-2023 program year. This assessment is the result of information obtained directly through surveying of families, school districts, childcare providers, and staff members as well as an analysis of publicly available data from federal, state, and local agencies.

This process involved a number of steps:

- A committee of staff, Policy Council members, Board members and community partners was established.

- The committee reviewed Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.11 section b in order to become familiar with the minimum areas to be addressed during the community assessment process.
- Data was gathered using a variety of methods including online research, phone calls, emails, surveys, focus groups, etc.
- The committee analyzed the data and identified strengths as well as areas of concern for our service area.

Guidance further dictates that each program must annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes including increased availability of publicly funded pre-kindergarten, rates of family and child homelessness, and significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

## **Major Findings**

### **Population**

The overall population in Southeast Iowa has trended down over the last ten years. This last year was no different; all counties had a decrease in population. The following chart displays the area population, those in poverty (100% of the federal poverty level, FPL), children age 0-5, and those served by our agency. Agency programs and services focus on persons who have low incomes.

<b>US Census Bureau April 1, 2020</b>					
<b>Data/Statistic</b>	<b>Des Moines County, IA</b>	<b>Henry County, IA</b>	<b>Lee County, IA</b>	<b>Louisa County, IA</b>	<b>Iowa (State)</b>
<b>Population, Census April 1, 2020</b>	38,910	20,482	33,555	10,837	3,190,369
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	13.2%	12.2%	14.1%	11.1%	11.1%
<b># Population Served by Agency in FY21</b>	5,995	1,947	4,570	1,008	n/a
<b>% Population served by agency</b>	14.8%	9.7%	12.76%	8.85%	n/a
<b>% Children age 0-5 years</b>	5.4%	5.2%	5.5%	5.4%	5.9%

### **Population by Race**

The population of our service area is primarily Caucasian, with African-American being the second highest representation in Des Moines and Lee Counties, and Asian being second highest in Henry and Louisa Counties. Des Moines County had a higher percentage of African-Americans (6.4%) than the state of Iowa (4.3%). In addition, Louisa County has a higher percent of Asians (3.5%) than the state of Iowa (2.8%). Tyson, a slaughterhouse/meat processing plant has drawn a population of Burmese refugees. Louisa County continues to have a higher number of

Hispanic/Latino (16.2%) compared to our other counties and compared to the state of Iowa (6.7%).

US Census Bureau April 1, 2020					
Race (entire population) by %	Des Moines County, IA	Henry County, IA	Lee County, IA	Louisa County, IA	State of Iowa
White	89%	92.3%	93.4%	92.8%	90.1%
Black/African American	6.4%	2.9%	3.2%	1.4%	4.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%
Asian	1.1%	2.4%	0.7%	3.5%	2.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Multi-Race (two or more from above)	3.0%	1.8%	2.2%	1.4%	2.1%
Ethnicity					
Hispanic/Latino	3.8%	5.4%	3.8%	16.2%	6.7%
Not Hispanic/Latino	86.1%	87.5%	90.2%	77.7%	84.1%

Our program has a higher percentage of Black/African American population (16%) than any of our four counties, and higher than the state of Iowa (4.3%). We also have a higher percentage of Multi-Race at 15%, and comparable percentage of Hispanic ethnicity (7%) than the state average (6.7%).

### Birth Rates

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics System, in 2020, 3,613,647 births were registered in the United States, which is down 4% (or 133,893) from 2019. The number of births in the United States has declined by an average of 2% per year since 2014. The general fertility rate declined by 4% from 2019 to 56 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44 in 2020. Birth rates declined for both married and unmarried women. Also in this report, Medicaid was the source of payment for 42% of all 2020 births. The preterm birth rate declined to 10.09% in 2020 from 10.23% in 2019; the rate of low birthweight declined to 8.24%. Birth rates for Southeast Iowa have also decreased. We anticipate continuing to see less need for preschool (age 3-5) slots due to this decline.

#### Iowa Birth Rates :

State/Territory	Births	Birth Rate	Fertility Rate
Iowa	36,114	11.4%	60.4%

### Agencies Serving Eligible Children

The childcare options within our service area vary in the quality, types of services provided, and cost. There are just not enough childcare slots for the number of children in need in our service area. Additionally, the costs of childcare can be prohibitive for families if subsidies are not available. In our service area there are a total of 41 licensed child care centers (not including our programs) with 2,565 slots available, and there are 80 registered child development (RCD) homes with 958 slots available for children (birth to school age). While the number of licensed childcare centers and preschools in the state of Iowa has increased slightly, the number of registered home-based childcare has decreased since 2018.

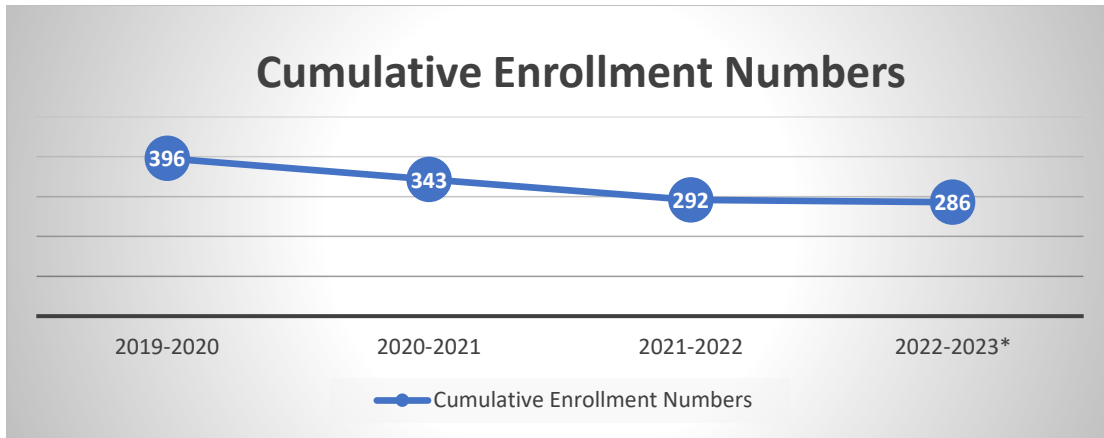
As for home visiting services, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, funded through the Lee County Public Health, served 47 families (slots) in Des Moines County and 87 families in Lee County. Henry and Louisa Counties are not supported by MIECHV funding. However, we do have the Family Development Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) home visiting program in all four counties in our service area and they served 114 families in their program year. Des Moines County served 43, Henry County served 18, Lee County Served 48, and Louisa County served 5 families from July 2021- June 2022.

Finally, 13 schools participate in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP). During a survey conducted in March 2023, only 7 schools responded. West Burlington, Burlington, and Keokuk reported their classrooms are filled to capacity this school year. The other schools continue to have open slots. Fort Madison and Keokuk had added additional slots and Burlington had decreased slots in the previous school year. However, none of the districts who responded to the survey reported a plan to change slots for next school year.

The Head Start leadership team reported that over time, the SWVPP program which serves four-year old children for free, has decreased the number of children we have enrolled in the same cities where we have centers. We have also noticed an increase in the number of three-year-old children enrolled in our Head Start program, which is likely an ongoing trend in the service area that the program will continue to monitor.

### **Our Cumulative Enrollment Data**

Our cumulative enrollment numbers have struggled since COVID. In March of 2020, we closed our classrooms for in-person instruction. We did not enroll any new children through the end of the regularly scheduled school year for Head Start. We did open Early Head Start back to in-person instruction in July of 2020. In the 2021-2022 school year, we only allowed 10 children per classroom for in-person instruction, based on the pandemic guidance and safety. This number increased back to regular capacity in February 2022, but we still did not fill all classrooms before the close of the school year. Our program lost a number of staff, who did not want to be vaccinated for COVID-19, when the Federal Vaccine Mandate was being put into place across the country; this caused us to not be able to open all of our classrooms.



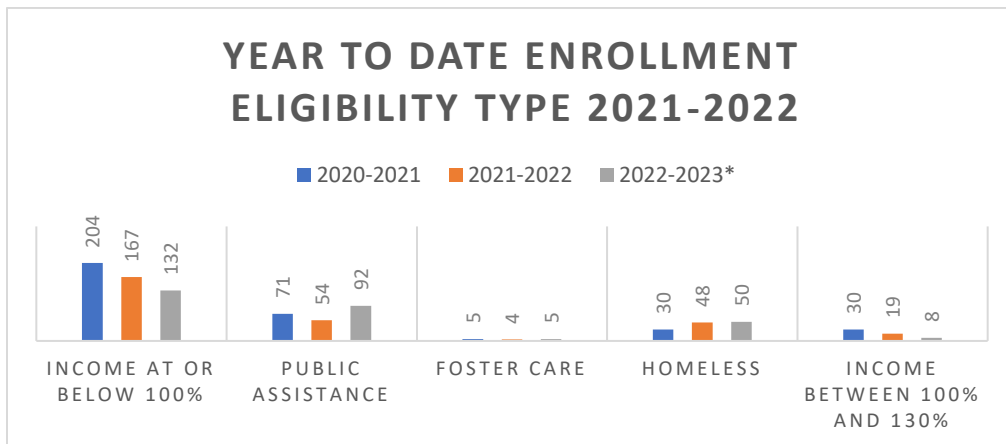
\*In the graph above, the 2022-2023 data is up to date as of April 30, 2023.

### Data Specific to Poverty

The poverty rate in our service area is higher in Des Moines, Henry and Lee as compared to the Iowa rate of 11.1%. Lee County is our highest in our services area sitting 3% higher than that of the state of Iowa.

The state average of children ages 0-17 who lived in poverty based on the 2015-2019 American Community Survey was 13.8%. Our service area is considerably higher at 21%. The Iowa average for children ages 0-4 is 16%, our service area rate is 27%. For children ages 5-17 Iowa's average is 13%, while our service area is 18.9%. There are 1,511 children age 0-4 below 100% poverty in Southeast Iowa according to the 2016-20 American Community Survey, Head Start/Early Head start served 18% of those children in 2021-2022.

Our programs participant eligibility status for the past three school years is listed below:



\*In the graph above, the 2022-2023 data is up to date as of April 30, 2023.

You can see a trend of increasing homeless children in our programs since the 2020-2021 school year, as well as an increase in public assistance status. The Office of Head Start added food assistance (SNAP) eligibility under the public assistance definition for eligibility for our

programs. This change has helped families become eligible automatically through providing proof of their SNAP benefits (just like FIP and SSI). We have found families have an easier time getting proof of SNAP, than they do trying to keep track of their income for the previous 12 months when completing applications. This has led to more families becoming eligible under the public assistance category.

## **Housing**

There is a shortage of affordable rental homes in Iowa available to extremely low-income individuals. Many low-income households are spending more than half of their income on housing. Once you figure in utilities, water etc. these families are often sacrificing things like food and healthcare to avoid evictions. Southeast Iowa is no different; we need safe, adequate and affordable housing in our communities too. The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports that in Iowa 65% of extremely low income renters have a severe cost burden (are paying more than 50% of their income towards housing). Community Action of Southeast Iowa helped 337 houses with rent assistance in 2022, and helped 4,498 households with utility assistance through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Additionally, Community Action of Southeast Iowa helped 2,304 individuals maintain water service through the Low Income Water Assistance Program (LIWAP).

## **Homelessness in Iowa Public Schools**

We survey our local public schools for their reported number of homeless children each year as part of our community assessment. Burlington Community School District consistently reports the highest number of public school students who are homeless as opposed to the other public schools who respond to our surveys. However, they are our largest district and they also have a 5-year grant to identify and help homeless families. Burlington identified 56 students as homeless in the 2021-2022 school year, which is a decrease from 76, identified in 2020-2021. Burlington gave no report for the 2022-2023 school year. Mediapolis Community Schools identified 1 homeless family in 2021-2022 school year, and 1 for 2022-2023 school year. In the 2022-2023 school year, Winfield reported 0 homeless children, New London reported 2 homeless children. While there were no reports given by any of the other districts, you can see in the state data below, the number of children that are experiencing homelessness in public schools by school year as well as the breakdown of types of homelessness experienced.

The number of families experiencing homelessness in our programs has been increasing. We follow the McKinney Vento homeless definition and make families aware of this at application time. We work with our families to find safe, adequate and affordable housing. In 2021-2022, 59% of our homeless Head Start families were able to acquire housing during their child's enrollment with us. Most of our families experiencing homelessness are considered "sheltered homelessness" which means people experiencing homelessness who were found in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other temporary settings. We have also had a small number of

families living in tents or campers, and some that live in housing that has no running water or electricity.

### **Child Abuse in Iowa**

There was a significant decrease in the total number of assessments in calendar year 2020, as reported by the Iowa Department of Human Services. This was most likely because the majority of mandatory reporters were not routinely seeing children and therefore were making less reports of suspected child abuse. The majority of children that are abused or neglected in the state of Iowa in 2021 were under the age of 5.

The Iowa Department of Human Services released the 2021 child abuse data. A total of 35,593 assessments for child abuse or neglect in calendar year 2021, an increase of 5,442 compared to 2020. Child Abuse rates in Southeast Iowa have been on the rise as well.

### **Substance Use/Misuse**

Iowa has one of the nation's highest levels of alcohol use and binge drinking, coupled with increasing methamphetamine use. Iowa Department of Public Health offers a statewide 24-hour crisis and resource line. Yourlifeiowa.org provides information and referral, counseling, crisis screening and service coordination, and linkages for problem gambling, substance use disorders, mental health, suicide, and children's mental health via text, talk, or live chat 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Iowa recorded a 38% increase in methamphetamine substance use disorder admissions over the period of 2014-2017 and saw a particularly large increase in recent usage by women. Methamphetamines are by far the most frequently reported substance used by women admitted to treatment in the state at 48.2%, with pregnant women reporting an even greater rate of 58.9%.

According to the Iowa Department of Corrections, drug convictions result in 17% of Iowa's incarceration population. Many non-violent offenders with substance use disorders are tied up in the criminal justice system when the potential exists for them to go to treatment instead. The opportunity to receive help and avoid a criminal record can eliminate possible future barriers such as denial of employment or housing, which often lead to more substance use.

### **Staff Feedback Survey**

Top issues impacting our children's educational achievements: 1. Parents lack of involvement 2. Behaviors in the classroom 3. Transportation 4. Parents lack of education/skills 5. Poor attendance

Top Mental Health Concerns for our children/families: 1. Depression 2. Anxiety 3. ADHD 4. Substance abuse/misuse 5. Undiagnosed/untreated mental illnesses



Top Health Concerns for our children/families: 1. Unbalanced diets 2. Undiagnosed/untreated mental health issues (self-medicating/drugs/alcohol) 3. Asthma 4. Overall sickness (COVID, etc) 5. Poor hygiene/lack of cleanliness

Top Nutrition Concerns for our children/families: 1. Lack of a variety of food served at home 2. Food costs 3. Too much fast food

Top Dental Concerns for our children/families: 1. Cavities/untreated decay 2. Not brushing at home 3. Lack of providers/waitlists

Top changes for families we serve in the last 5 years: 1. Lack of parent engagement 2. More “other adults” as caregivers (instead of parents) 3. More homelessness/couch surfing

What are the highest needs for our families: 1. Transportation 2. Employment 3. Safe/affordable childcare 4. Adequate/affordable housing 5. Increase parents education

What are the top community changes in the last 5 years: 1. Increase in transient/homeless families 2. Increased cost of living 3. Increase in entry-level jobs/pay rate, but usually not fulltime/no benefits

What are the highest needs of the community: 1. Public transportation/reliable 2. Better jobs 3. Safe and affordable childcare 4. Safe and affordable housing 5. Adult education opportunities

What can we do to better serve families and children: 1. Solution to transportation issues 2. More staff/classroom supports 3. Increase classroom hours to full day

**Community Assessment Committee discussions of strengths, needs and updates; 2022 updates (in red) and 2023 updates (in blue)**

### **Des Moines County**

- High child abuse numbers
- High crime, and domestic violence
- **Factories closing, there are still jobs, but not always desirable (fast food, retail)**
- Increase in people moving here from larger cities (other states)
- **Increased incarceration of EHS/HS parents**
- **Literacy skills decrease for parents and children**
- **Increase in disabilities, behaviors in EHS/HS but children are not always qualifying for AEA intervention services**
- **Children in foster care in 2021 = 121 down from 123 in 2020**
- **19% of children under 17 years old live in poverty according to the 2022 County Health Rankings Roadmap the Iowa average is 12%**
- **2021-2022 Burlington Early/Head Start has 15 families on public assistance (SSI/FIP) at enrollment.**

- Metal Health: Positive community activities, Downtown Partners, Burlington Riverfront Entertainment, parks, civic music, farmers markets, Art Center, Capital Theater, outside movies
- Young House has decreased their services and service area
- Formal supports; churches, food banks, library (both adult & child programs), ISU Extension, Hope Haven, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Iowa Works & Vocational Rehab
- Childcare options are plentiful for all ages except infants, it is harder to find second shift and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift providers, staffing is a big issue, low pay, high turnover etc.
- Four ECI (Early Childhood Iowa) areas have joined to form an EC-PBIS Program to provide training, consulting and coaching for Early Childhood Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies - they hope to be up and running in July 2022.
- BCSD (Burlington Community School District) Early Childhood program changes for fall 2021: The childcare has 4 slots for infants, plan to add 4 infants in 2022-23, 6 slots for 2 year olds, 36 slots for 3 year olds, and 24 slots for 4 year olds. They will use childcare subsidies, however the cost will be high for those that do not qualify for subsidies.
- Burlington has 65 childcare providers with total of 1,246 slots (according to CCR&R)
- SCC launched an Early Childhood Program, with classrooms at Corse Early Childhood Center, students complete observations in Early/Head Start and with the BCSD Childcare and Preschool program.
- YMCA childcare took over the KidZone at SCC (Southeastern Community College). The capacity for 0-5 years is 46 at SCC and 38 at the YMCA – applied for additional funds from CARES/ARPA to expand slots in 2021.
- Mediapolis Public School announced 5/5/21 that due to the increased kindergarten class numbers they will not be able to offer their 4 year old preschool program in the fall. (This program was tuition-based but there is no state funded preschool at Mediapolis either)
- Hospital still has a childcare center
- Burlington has a public bus system – it may not be reliable or convenient (ends at 4:30pm, doesn't have scheduled stops on a routine/route)
- Housing: high wait list for low income housing in Burlington; low rent housing authority taking fewer applications; section 8 has years long wait list; there are many requirements to secure housing
- Individuals with a criminal background/poor credit cannot qualify for many houses (background checks, past evictions)
- Median income is low compared to state average
- Rent is high for our median income
- TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance) program ended in the state 3/31/22
- Build-a-Bed and Slumberland 40 Winks programs get beds to children/families in need
- BCSD has high number of public school students who are homeless –they have a grant to identify and help homeless families. Burlington identified 56 students as homeless

the school year 2021-2022 – a decrease as they had 76 identified in 2020-2021. No report for 2022; Mediapolis Community School identified 1 homeless family in 2021-22 school year, and 1 for 2022-23. No report from the other districts contacted.

- 2021-2022 Burlington Early/Head Start have 18 families identified as homeless at enrollment.
- Transitions DMC (Des Moines County) homeless shelter is now open to provide housing and assistance to homeless families
- Shortage of CDLs (Commercial Driver’s License) in the area
- WIC use has increased during COVID, families can qualify over the phone, less in-person appointments to “miss/no show”, easier to use on a card.
- Multiple food pantry options, accessible with decent availability (Lend a Paw open late)
- Burlington & West Burlington schools have summer lunch programs (high rate of free & reduced lunch)
- Reintegration programs/transitions needed for incarcerated families
- Lots of parents working part time jobs with no benefits
- Many employers are offering hiring incentives for new staff
- YMCA Burlington has been providing weekly food packages for children & two local churches have been giving out food boxes for families during COVID (several have ended now)
- Great River Hospitals merged with Mt. Pleasant and Fort Madison Hospitals and became: Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Centers – New leadership at the hospital
- Waitlists for dental and physicals for HS/EHS kids
- Early/Head start are serving a number of children with disabilities for 2021-22: 12 IEP (Individual Education Plan) for Head Start age, 3 IFSP (Individual Family Services Plans) for Early Head Start age
- School districts report overall decrease in enrollment
- 2021-22 BCSD - Corse preschool plan is for 21 slots for 3 year olds (paid slots) 10 in the morning and 11 in the afternoon, which is a decrease as they had planned for 32-64 slots originally in 2021-22. Their 4 year old plan is 180 slots, 100 in the morning and 80 in the afternoon. They were not filled to capacity this year. This is a decrease in 4 year old slots from 200 slots in 2021-22 & 220 slots in 2019-2020. 2022-23 4-year old have 100 AM slots 80 PM slots they are full this year
- 2021-22 West Burlington School has 38 voluntary preschool slots, 19 morning and 19 afternoon, they are filled to capacity and hope to add 2 slots next year. 2022-23 report 20 AM and 20 PM slots, they are full this year
- 2022-23 Danville schools report 40 AM and 40 PM slots, they are not full this year
- 2022-23 School year Head Start has 4 classrooms closed

## Henry County

- Increase in child abuse numbers
- Increase in grandparents raising their grandchildren at HS/EHS
- Children in foster care in 2021 = 56 down from 57 in 2020
- 13% of children under 17 years old live in poverty according to the 2022 County Health Rankings Roadmap the Iowa average is 12%
- 2021-2022 Tolson Head Start has 5 families on public assistance (SSI/FIP) at enrollment.
- Iowa Wesleyan University will close May 2023 – impact on population, jobs, resources
- West Liberty Foods closed
- Hispanic population seems to have decreased, but those that stuck around after the ICE Raid have been more involved in community some have opened businesses
- SEIL (Southeast Iowa Link - Mental health services provider) partnership with Hillcrest to offer same day mental health crisis services/appointments
- Mental Health: Positive community activities, (especially in Mt. Pleasant, New London) Mt Pleasant square, New London park, Community gardens, farmers markets, conservation center, Old Threshers
- Family Connections has a bi-lingual staff member
- Formal supports; churches, food banks, library (new discovery center for kids), Healthy Henry Communities group, Fellowship Cup, ISU Extension
- Parts of the county are a childcare desert- lack of staff applying for center-based job openings (or staying once hired).
- The new Mount Pleasant Childcare Center opened in the summer of 2021 and serve 45 children. They are charging an application fee, but do take Childcare Assistance. They are now offering after school care. They want to expand their building and add more slots. They do have a young professional on the board now. They have had 3 directors in 2 years (since opening). In 2022 they had a staff member with a founded abuse case.
- Need for quality childcare centers – extended hours (shifts that work with factories in town) Wayland is working on a new center
- ISU Extension adding ECPBIS services – more info to come
- Lost a well-known home provider in February 2022.
- Internet connectivity is not reliable anywhere outside Mt Pleasant
- Housing for low income limited; low income moving more into city limits
- Increase in intergenerational families
- Increase in homeless – couch surfing families at HS/EHS
- 2021-2022 Tolson Head Start has 2 families identified as homeless at enrollment
- 2022-23 School Year; Winfield reported 0 homeless children, New London reported 2, and no report from the other districts contacted
- TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance) program ended in the state 3/31/22
- Rehab support/substance misuse – unmet need – ADDS office, hospital 24 hour hold only
- Shortage of CDLs (Commercial Driver's License) in area

- Reintegration programs/transitions needed for incarcerated families
- More families are using HiSET (formerly known as GED) now that it is online
- Great River Hospitals merged with Mt. Pleasant and Fort Madison Hospitals and became: Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Centers, no longer has childbirth services in Henry Co. They have limited prenatal & postnatal services.
- There is a need for pediatric dental care
- Stand-alone urgent care and a walk-in clinic
- WIC use has increased during COVID, families can qualify over the phone, less in-person appointments to “miss/no show”, easier to use on a card. Increased difficulty with transportation from small rural towns
- Nutrition; there is a gap between those that need it and those that qualify (working poor)
- Early/Head start are serving a number of children with disabilities for 2021-22: 4 IEP, 2 IFSP
- 2021-22 Winfield Mount Union School has 34 volunteer preschool slots, 17 in morning and 17 in afternoon, they were not filled to capacity this year. They have 18 slots for 3 year olds (paid slots). They do not anticipate changes.
- 2021-22 New London Schools have 20 slots for voluntary preschool, 10 in morning, 10 in afternoon, they are not filled to capacity this year, and have no changes for next year. 2022-23 report 20 AM slots, 20 PM slots and they are not full this year
- 2021-22 Mt. Pleasant Schools have 120 slots for voluntary preschool, 60 in the morning, 60 in afternoon, they are not filled to capacity and have no anticipated changes for next year. 2022-23 report 45 AM slots, 45 PM Slots, they are not full this year
- 2022-23 School year WACO reports 40 full day slots (3 days a week) they are not full this year
- 2021-22 & 2022-23 School year neither Head Start classroom was filled to capacity due to lack of children to fill the spots
- 2021-22 & 2022-23 School years Early Head Start has not had full staffing so we were unable to enroll all slots, we did have children on the waitlist

## Lee County

- High child abuse numbers
- HS/EHS has seen increase in fathers as primary care givers
- Increase in literacy issues with HS/EHS parents and kids
- Increase of HHS (Health A& Human Services formerly DHS) involvement with our HS/EHS families
- Public assistance as their income qualifier has increased since we can use SNAP for HS/EHS
- Siemens in outside Fort Madison and the ADM plant outside Keokuk closed

- Children in foster care in 2021 = 135 up from 107 in 2020
- 16% of children under 17 years old live in poverty according to the 2022 County Health Rankings Roadmap the Iowa average is 12%
- 2021-2022 Fort Madison Early/Head Start has 8 families on public assistance (SSI/FIP) at enrollment
- 2021-2022 Keokuk Early/Head Start has 13 families on public assistance (SSI/FIP) at enrollment
- Mental Health: Positive community activities, Rodeo, riverfront improvements, farmers markets, several food pantries
- Lee Co. is included in new SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) grant obtained by Van Buren School District to address underage and binge drinking in both Van Buren and Lee Counties – started February 2021
- Childcare centers not full due to no staff – Child care centers are struggling to stay open – staffing is a big issue, low pay, high turnover, etc...
- Fort Madison Hospital has added a childcare center
- Parts of county a childcare desert and centers are struggling to stay open due to staffing - low pay, high turnover etc. Waitlists in Keokuk & Fort Madison for early childcare slots in the community
- Fort Madison area data reflects need for additional EHS slots but we do not have the space (current building in bad shape)
- Great River Hospitals merged with Mt. Pleasant and Fort Madison Hospitals and became: Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Centers
- Added a stand-alone Urgent Care in Fort Madison
- Keokuk still has two clinics but no hospital/emergency care – sent to Fort Madison or Quincy
- All parents in the home working number high; median household income lower than the state
- Drug crime rates high; rehab support/substance abuse support– unmet need
- Reintegration programs/transitions link needed for incarcerated families
- Many employers are offering hiring incentives for new staff
- Housing-section 8 not taking applications; low rent houses have waitlist
- 2021-22 School year Fort Madison Early/Head Start has 4 families identified as homeless at enrollment.
- 2021-2022 Keokuk Early/Head Start has 10 families identified as homeless at enrollment.
- No report given by the public school districts contacted for homeless numbers
- TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance) program ended in the state 3/31/22
- Serious lack of affordable, adequate, and safe housing

- Shortage of CDLs (Commercial Driver’s License) in area for those jobs – bus drivers, semi drivers, Fort Madison public school does not bus within 2 miles of the schools, with an approved waiver from the state
- Lots of parents working part time jobs with no benefits
- Working poor-over 100% poverty but still in poverty conditions
- WIC use has increased during COVID, families can qualify over the phone, less in-person appointments to “miss/no show”, easier to use on a card
- Both Keokuk & Fort Madison HS sites are partners with a backpack food ministry that provides our HS children with a bag of food for the weekend
- Several food pantries and mobile food pantry – hours are hard for working poor
- Keokuk Hospital is now under Blessing Health Systems of Quincy – hopefully offering some stability, but not sure of scope/impact
- Early/Head start are serving a number of children with disabilities for 2021-22 in Fort Madison: 6 IEP, 0 IFSP in Keokuk: 5 IEP, 0 IFSP
- 2021-2022 Keokuk has 11 childcare providers with a total of 446 slots (according to CCR&R)
- Fort Madison Schools announced 4/23/21 that they will add 2 Preschool Integrated classrooms to Richardson Schools in fall 2021 – no response as to the number of slots added – no response this year to our survey
- 2021-22 Holy Trinity Catholic Schools are adding 3 & 4 year old childcare/preschool
- 2021-22 Keokuk School District has 100-120 slots for voluntary preschool, 60 morning and 40-60 in afternoon, not full to capacity this year. They tried to offer 20 full day slots but did not have staffing to keep it open. 2022-23 report 80 AM slots, 60 PM slots and additional 20-paid slots that allow for full day services. They are full to capacity this year.
- 2021-22 Central Lee School has 80 voluntary preschool slots, 40 morning and 40 afternoon, they were not filled to capacity this year, and do not anticipate any changes
- 2021-22 & 2022-23 School year Fort Madison Head Start Dual classroom at Eichacker not been full all year, we have a number of families report that they cannot manage the mid-day transportation now that we have no bussing
- 2021-22 & 2022-23 School year Keokuk Head Start has 1 classroom that is closed due to no staff this year, and not enough children on the waitlist
- 2021-22 & 2022-23 School year Early Head Start in Keokuk has been without 1-2 staff all year so they are not filled to capacity, we do have a healthy waitlist for Early Head Start

### **Louisa County**

- Close-knit, informal support systems are a strength
- Formal support system – interagency partnerships, faith communities, donors and volunteers

- Positive economic development, new businesses opening, current employers are consistent
- Highway 61 development is still ongoing
- Continuing to see a lot of diversity and acceptance with Burmese and Hispanic families
- The number of undocumented individuals is not counted in census
- Children in foster care in 2021 = 25 up from 24 in 2020
- 12% of children under 17 years old live in poverty according to the 2022 County Health Rankings Roadmap the Iowa average is 12%
- Housing – very limited housing available for rentals; more than 2 bedrooms needed, housing regulations are not up to standards
- High rate of home ownership, rural charm
- Highest median income of all 4 counties
- There is a need for childcare providers, very few centers (Columbus Junction center closed, possibly reopening soon)
- Need quality pre-k services
- Increase in child abuse numbers
- TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance) program ended in the state 3/31/22
- WIC use has increased during COVID, families can qualify over the phone, less in-person appointments to “miss/no show”, easier to use on a card
- Schools have food pantries for kids
- Considered a food desert –pantries have limitations; location and hours, no real grocery store, and lack of cultural diversity in choices
- Tyson employees hit hard with COVID early on (worker illnesses and deaths, they were on the news for not handling things well - unsafe conditions for employees)
- Hours are limited at social services, service are located in the country and not easily accessed by low-income individuals they are intended to help
- Need for interpretive services
- 2021-22 Morning Sun Elementary School has 20 volunteer 4 year old Preschool slots 2/5 hours a day, 18 of the 20 slots were filled this year. No plan to change anything
- 2021-22 Wapello Schools has 40 voluntary preschool slots full day 5 days a week, they are filled to capacity and anticipate no changes
- 2021-22 Columbus Junction Schools have 60 full day voluntary preschool slots, 1 classroom has shared visions funding. They are filled to capacity this year and anticipate no changes

## **Recommendations**

### **A) Recruitment Areas/Slots/Service Delivery Option**

- Des Moines County:



- Maintain the current center in Burlington with in the Corse Early Childhood Center (we relocated to Corse to start the 2020-21 school year)
- Looking to move some HS slots to another county, and/or convert HS slots to EHS slots
- Consider options for providing preschool in Mediapolis since they do not participate in the state wide voluntary preschool program
- Henry County:
  - We acquired a new facility for health and safety reasons, also more centrally located in Mount Pleasant – the federal startup funds have been awarded, meetings with architect and planning committees have began April 2021. We are continuing to work toward renovating for the 2023-2024 school year
  - Possibly looking to expand infant and toddler care to address the lack of affordable, available infant and toddler care in the community needed by a significant number of families offering center-based, by applying for Early Head Start Expansion Funds when space allows at the new building
- Lee County/Fort Madison:
  - Maintain a center in Fort Madison
  - Combine and relocate both Eichacker and Richardson centers due to health and safety reasons – **startup funds have been awarded, need to acquire a facility and renovate/build to accommodate all slots in Fort Madison at the same location**
  - Increase access to high quality early childhood settings for infants and toddlers by applying for Early Head Start Expansion funds once space allows in a new building.
  - **Switch existing dual classroom to duration classrooms – as families struggle with transportation mid-day for the dual classroom since we no longer have bussing/transportation**
- Lee County/Keokuk:
  - Maintain the center in Keokuk
  - **Possibly looking to add EHS slots (suggest dropping one HS duration class and converting slots to EHS)**
  - **Discussions have begun with the Keokuk school district about offering dual classroom to help expand opportunities for children to dual enroll in both preschool programs**
- Louisa County:
  - Continue to consider any centers in Louisa County; possible need for services if families qualify as homeless, FIP, SSI, SNAP (otherwise mostly over income)
  - Need would primarily be for part day center-based services for 3 year olds, and possibly Early Head Start

**B) Consider how our program can respond to the increased child abuse rates across our service area**

- Be intentional with mental health supports for children, families, and staff
- Add additional child abuse curriculum and increase frequency of use
- Consider shifting part day classes to longer duration hours
- Add additional trainings for staff:
  - Trauma Informed Care/Resiliency (training provided at 2019-20 pre-service)
  - Child Abuse Awareness – Minimal Facts Interviewing provided to all staff virtually in 2020-21. Family development specialist attended Quad Cities Child Abuse Conference virtually in 2020-2021
  - A number of virtual training opportunities were provided to staff during 2020-2021 including Tall Cop Says Stop, Stewards of Children, and Mental Health First Aid

**C) Build partnerships to recruit and support vulnerable populations, including working families, pregnant women, and children in foster care**

- School districts
  - Develop/Improve Community Partnerships with school districts
  - Encourage districts to allow HS to serve children under 100% poverty or at least dual enroll children so that they receive HS's comprehensive services
  - Find a way to share information with SWVPP teachers (who have Elementary Education degrees) about child development and best practices for preschool children
  - Consider working with school districts for training opportunities for all teaching staff to attend together
  - Consider a partnership with schools to help with transportation issues for families getting Head Start age children to our program
- HHS (Health & Human Services) regarding Kinship Care and Foster Care
- Foster Care support personnel
- McKinney-Vento liaisons at the school districts – Family Services Coordinator attended a state training for McKinney-Vento Liaisons in April 2023
- Community
  - Attend interagency meetings
  - Have a presence in our communities through tables at events and at low-rent housing complexes, provide presentations to community groups
  - Continue monitoring need for services in Mediapolis & Louisa County

**D) Engage in statewide discussions regarding early education and social services to advocate for children, families, and staff.**

**E) Full Day Services**

- Continue to look for grants to be able to provide full day services/wrap around care in Head Start
  - We need longer hours for working parents 6.5 hours in HS and 6.5 in EHS is not always workable for families unless they have large number of family/community supports
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