



# CERRO GORDO, HANCOCK AND WORTH COUNTIES EMPOWERMENT AREA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Mission:** Building strategies to improve the lives of children and their families through collaboration, coordination, and planning in Cerro Gordo, Hancock, and Worth Counties.

**Vision:** Working together so every child is happy, healthy, and ready to learn.

### Community Plan Priorities:

- ★Empower new and expectant parents through a parent support/education/home visitation program.
- ★Improve accessibility to, and quality of, child care and preschool for all families with young children.
- ★Enrich the network of community health services to guarantee children a healthy start.

**Local Indicators:** The following are the top priority indicators for FY 06-07 (in random order):

- Infants born at low birth weight
- Childhood lead poisoning prevention
- Child abuse/safety
- Child Care
- Preschool Opportunities
- Prenatal care
- Kindergarten Readiness

### Cooperation Collaboration

#### Accomplishments:

The Empowerment Area continues to bring together service providers from a variety of organizations to work together and to make them aware of services available. Current empowerment programs have made efforts to enhance services rather than duplicate programming. The coordination of the program has enhanced/expanded upon previous collaboration through involvement with several committees in the area. (i.e. 7 C's (DECAT), United Way Vision Council, Early Access, 3D (Data group), The board also has moved forward to work with the local AEA 267 to provide QPPS training for local Childcare providers and preschools. Area programs also collaborate in the search for identifying and obtaining alternate sources of funding. Empowerment board members serve on a variety of task forces, planning boards, and advisory committees and bring a wealth of information, as well as serve as an information dissemination method to our community.

### Primary Service Provided:

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Childcare Scholarship Program              | Lead Free Kids-Blood Tests      |
| Child Care Resource and Referral           | Lead Free Kids/Home Inspections |
| Family Connections Home Visitation Program | Preschool Scholarship Program   |
| Clear Lake Learning Connection             | Smoke Free Families             |
| N-K Learning Connection                    | ABCD Creative Drama Project     |
| Little Cardinals Learning Connection       | Community Collaboration         |
| Mason City Learning Connection             | AEA 267-QPPS                    |
| Charlie Brown Get Well Center              | NICAO Provider Education        |
| Head Start Transportation                  | Better Beginnings               |
| NICAO Oral Health                          |                                 |

**Key Identified Need/Priority:** Low Birth Weight Babies, Kindergarten Readiness, Child Abuse/Safety

**Measurable Goals:**

1. Family Connections will promote and enhance optimal health and development.
2. Family Connections will promote positive parenting, and family interaction
3. Family Connections will empower parents to provide safe and nurturing family environment, and prevent child abuse.

**Why this is important:**

Family Connections is a home visitation program that target pregnant and parenting families with social and economic risk factors, teen parenting, limited parenting skills and barriers to accessing support services available in their community. The Iowa Department of Human Services determined that 15,060 children suffered abuse in 2005. Cerro Gordo County is 9<sup>th</sup> in the state of Iowa in documented abuse in children in 2004. Most victims are under the age of 4 years old and suffer maltreatment by their parents or caregivers. Studies have shown for years that abused/neglected children have unhealthy outcomes and are less likely to be school ready. Lack of parenting knowledge, poor housing, substance abuse, economic stress, inadequate health/child care, and limited or chaotic support makes life overwhelming for many parents. Multiple social, economic, health and emotional risk factors are formula for children *not being school ready*. It is medically proven that brain growth is at its highest between the age of 0-3, critical to sensory, motor, and language capacities, as well as mental health and social functioning, which impact a child's ability to learn/succeed in school and later in life. Through Family Connections comprehensive approach to tackling these problems we provide learning experiences, and services that children/families need before entering kindergarten. Providing families with the needed education/referral services through *home visitation* to increase their knowledge in, e.g. healthy life styles during pregnancy, tracking doctor visits, nutrition, fetal growth/development, bonding/attachment, managing time/stress, parenting/discipline techniques, ages/stages of development, developmental screenings, staying in school, and combined with referrals to community resources, e.g. prenatal classes, medical home, financial, healthier life style changes which meets the needs of decreasing low birth weight babies, preventing child abuse and, preparing children to be kindergarten ready.

**State Result Linkage:**

**Service, Product or Activity to impact the Key Need/Priority:**

Performance Measure(s) (Baseline and trend information)	FY 03/04	FY 04/05	FY 05/06	Current FY 06/07
	2004	2005	2006	2007
• Participant babies were born weighing 2500 grams or more	100%	100%	99%	100%
• Participant babies were born drug free	100%	100%	100%	100%
• Participating children have health insurance	98%	98%	100%	100%
• Participant children have current immunizations	97%	98%	98%	98%
• Participant parents report and demonstrate increased knowledge	93%	94%	100%	96.7%
• Participant families did not have a confirmed child abuse/neglect case	99%	100%	97%	96.7%

**Infants Born with Low Birth Weight**

Area	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Cerro Gordo	34	67.6	23	46.7	41	82.0	33	70.1
Hancock	8	72.1	8	51.6	4	34.2	8	74.8
Worth	3	44.8	4	49.4	9	121.6	3	34.9
State of Iowa	2,493	66.4	2,520	66.1	2,688	70.1	2,823	71.9

Source: Vital Statistics of Iowa - a publication of the Iowa Dept. of Public Health

Low Birth Weight = Live birth with a birth weight under 2,500 grams

**Analysis of the Data/ Factors Affecting the Data:** Low birth rate is defined as a birth weight under 5 lbs. 5 oz. (Data Source: "Iowa Health Fact Book, 2001, 2003 and 2005". The data indicates that, overall, more low birth weight babies are born in the state than are born in our area. However, the trend in Worth county shows a significant decrease in low birth weight babies over time, as opposed to overall increases in Cerro Gordo and Hancock counties.

