



# 2022 IOWA ACES POLICY COALITION PRIORITIES

Strengthening family well-being is critical as we emerge from the pandemic, enabling children to learn and grow, caregivers to fully contribute, and Iowa communities to thrive. The policies and systems we create shape the conditions in which families live and determine Iowans' ability to access support and resources to be healthy and well. Iowa ACES 360 advocates for protective policies that improve these community conditions, reduce family stress and trauma, and create a thriving Iowa for all.

## ADVANCE TRAUMA-INFORMED, EQUITABLE SYSTEMS

**When we intentionally design our systems to remove barriers for accessing essential needs and promote family well-being, we ensure every family has the chance to thrive—strengthening our state and reducing strain on these systems.**

Assess policy impact on historically marginalized communities to ensure equitable access to resources and supports that promote health and well-being.

Disaggregate data to analyze progress and ensure equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to address health disparities.

Implement intentional workforce strategies to increase the number of providers of color in the health and human services fields to better represent the diversity of Iowans.

## ENHANCE SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN IOWA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

**If we invest in a robust public education system and inclusive learning environments, we help children and school staff heal from the effects of stress during the pandemic and increase children's capacity to learn and fully contribute to our state.**

Increase flexible funding for Iowa schools and AEAs to expand social-emotional supports for students and enhance community-based partnerships that promote whole family well-being.

Expand training on adverse childhood experiences to include cultural humility and healing-centered approaches and extend training to include educators in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

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Learn more at [www.IowaAces360.org](http://www.IowaAces360.org)



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## CONTINUE DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

**Mental health is connected to social, emotional, and cognitive development and is a foundation for a healthy life, healthy community, and healthy state. When we ensure mental health needs are met, people are more likely to do better in school and lead healthy and productive lives.**

Ensure the continued development of Iowa's Children's Behavioral Health System to meet the unique developmental needs of children and adolescents, including programs which support prevention, early identification, and early intervention services.

Recruit and retain the mental health and behavioral health workforce by ensuring competitive Medicaid reimbursement rates and developing a workforce strategy that includes incentives for direct care and behavioral health providers.

## IMPROVE FAMILIES' ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**Ensuring that kids and families have access to the care and support they need helps them get and stay healthy. Health coverage improves the financial, physical, and emotional well-being of all members of the family.**

Protect Medicaid from harmful changes and funding cuts that would take away health care from eligible children and families.

Increase access to prenatal and maternal health home-visitation services as a primary prevention and early intervention strategy for childhood trauma and family stress.

Extend postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months, strengthening financial stability and healthcare access for birthing individuals.

## BOLSTER THE FINANCIAL SECURITY OF IOWA'S FAMILIES

**When we ease families' financial stress, we increase parents' capacity for supportive family relationships and reduce childhood adversity.**

Increase access to safe, affordable housing and create pathways to homeownership: Safe, quality housing strengthens communities, reduces family stress, creates stability for children, and improves everyone's well-being.

## ADVANCE TRAUMA- INFORMED CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

**Systems that are trauma informed and healing centered are better able to improve children's safety, permanency, and well-being and reduce the long-term impact of trauma.**

Ensure IDPH and DHS alignment process articulates a cohesive vision to prevent childhood trauma, promote well-being, and provide effective healing-centered and early intervention services and supports.

Require juvenile justice referrals for all youth to community-based pre-charge diversion programs for first-time simple misdemeanor offenses.