Iowa CHILD CARE Resource & Referral
www.iowaccrr.org

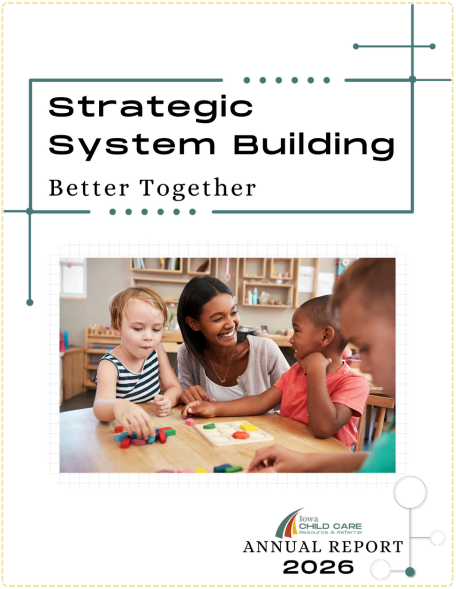
Parent Post

Issue No.4	Fall	2026

Parent Services Update

The Iowa CCR&R Parent Services team helps families find quality child care and access the information to support their child's learning and development.
As families prepared for the start of the school year, Parent Services received more referrals through the website and by phone. Many families searched for child care that fit changing schedules and routines, including before- and after-school care, bus route needs, and ongoing child care searches.
Parent Services shared materials with more than 950 libraries across Iowa and connected with welcome centers throughout the state. Libraries report that families often turn to them for local information and resources. Parent Services materials give libraries another resource to share with families.
We have also begun connecting with hospitals and clinics across Iowa to increase awareness of Parent Services resources and strengthen partnerships that support families.
If you would like Parent Services materials for your organization, business, community event, or facility, you can request them on our website or email us.

Request Marketing Materials | Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral



Want to learn more - browse the "Connecting Families to Care" section of the CCR&R FY27 Annual Report

Families have different preferences when searching for child care.



Connect with Parent Services
Parent Referral Specialists can answer questions, discuss child care options, share resources, and conduct a customized referral search based on your family's needs. Translation services are also available.
Call CCR&R Parent Services at 855-244-5301

Complete an Online Referral Request
Complete the online referral form, and a Parent Referral Specialist will search for child care options and email you the results.
Parent Referral Form | Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

Search Independently with Iowa Child Care Connect
Iowa Child Care Connect is available 24/7 and allows families to search for regulated child care programs using filters and real-time vacancy data.
Iowa Child Care Search

Supporting Children Through Change: Transitions, Routines, and Communication

Children may experience changes throughout the year, including moving to a new classroom, meeting new teachers, or getting to know new classmates. These transitions can help build relationships, confidence, and new experiences.
Families can support children during times of change by helping them build connections with the adults who care for them each day. Taking time to get to know your child's teachers and caregivers helps create a strong partnership between families and providers. Showing interest in your child's caregivers and learning about their daily experiences also models relationship-building skills for children.
If your child is old enough, ask them to introduce you to their teachers and caregivers. Building positive relationships can help children feel comfortable, confident, and supported throughout the year.

The Importance of Routines

Predictable routines help both children and adults know what to expect each day. Routines can provide structure, stability, and comfort.
As children settle back into the school year, routines become especially important. Returning to regular schedules at home, in child care, and at school can help children adjust to classroom expectations, improve focus, and make daily transitions smoother. Establishing routines early in the school year can set children up for academic and emotional success.
Children benefit from consistency, even when holidays change daily schedules. Keeping regular bedtimes, mealtimes, and family expectations during breaks can make it easier for children to return to school or child care when the holiday season ends.

Partnering with Your Child Care Provider

Child care providers use routines to create a predictable and supportive environment for children. Learning your child's daily schedule and staying in open communication with your provider can help create consistency between home and child care. When families understand and support established routines, children often experience smoother transitions and greater confidence throughout their day.
Communication is an important part of that partnership, especially when your child's usual routine changes.
Let your provider know about changes that may affect your child's day, including:

- **An absence**
- **Late arrival**
- **A different person picking up your child**
- **A major life change**
- **or even a challenging day**

Sharing information with your provider can help them better support your child. Small updates can make a big difference and help ensure everyone is working together to meet your child's needs.
Routines do not have to be perfect to be effective. Whether your family is getting back into the school-year rhythm or preparing for upcoming holiday breaks, creating consistent routines can help reduce stress, build confidence, and support healthy development for everyone in the family.



Planning for Illness Season

Holiday gatherings, school activities, and colder weather bring more illnesses. Reviewing your child care provider's illness policy can help families prepare for unexpected absences and understand when children should stay home or return to care.

Make a backup plan before illness occurs. Consider who could help if your child cannot attend care or your child care program temporarily closes. This could include a spouse or partner, grandparents, a family member, a friend, or another trusted support person who can assist when needed.

Communication is also important. If your child will be absent due to illness, notify your provider as soon as possible. This helps providers plan for the day and ensures they know your child is safe.

No one plans to get sick, and child care providers work hard to maintain healthy environments for children. Home-based providers may occasionally need to close when they are ill to help prevent the spread of illness and maintain health and safety practices. Child care centers may sometimes experience staffing challenges due to illness and must maintain required staff-to-child ratios to operate safely.

Encouraging healthy habits such as frequent handwashing, enough sleep, and covering coughs and sneezes. These habits can help reduce the spread of illness for children, families, and providers.



Child Care | Health & Human Services: Staff to Child Ratios

Supporting a Stable Child Care Workforce

On April 9, 2026, Iowa signed the Child Care Workforce Program into law after three years as a pilot initiative. The program supports retention in Iowa's early childhood workforce and promotes stability for providers, children, and families.

Consistent caregivers help children build lasting relationships and experience greater continuity in their daily routines.

Learn more:

CCA Child Care Workforce Program Permanent | Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

IOWA™
Health and Human Services

Stay Connected and Share Resources

Share this newsletter with family members, friends, child care providers, employers, community organizations, or anyone in Iowa seeking child care resources.

Know someone looking for child care or child care resources?

Encourage them to visit the Iowa CCR&R website or connect with Parent Services for personalized support and information.

Interested in future updates?

Join the Parent Services newsletter mailing list. Parent Services publishes two newsletters each year featuring resources, services, and information that support Iowa families and communities.

