

RESULTS FROM PARTNERSHIP WITH Sesame Street in Communities

August 2020-July 2021



Iowa Partnership

The foundation for lifelong well-being begins in early childhood. Supporting children with social-emotional skills—such as managing big feelings, playing well with others, and making good choices—are building blocks children need for good mental health and to excel in school and life.

The pandemic especially has caused families to experience prolonged and elevated levels of stress, disrupted routines, and isolation. By intentionally giving caregivers the tools to help children cope and thrive through these challenges, we can improve children's ability to become healthy and contributing members of our community now and in the future.

The Iowa Alliance for Healthy Kids formed as a collaboration with Sesame Street in Communities (SSIC) to improve the social and emotional well-being of Iowa's kids. This unique partnership has focused on offering caregivers, providers, and leaders in Iowa messages and tools to help children ages 0-8 build skills and to promote early relational health within families. Iowa is one of 13 communities partnering with Sesame Street in Communities across the nation.

With a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, the Iowa Alliance worked with Sesame Street in Communities most intensely from August 2020-July 2021.

Key activities included:

1. Training 24 Abby's Ambassadors to deliver presentations for providers on how to use the Sesame Street in Communities resources in their work with families and children.
2. Creating materials—an activity book, handouts, and social media messages—and distributing materials and Comfy-Cozy Nest books through programs serving families and children.
3. Building awareness of the issue with decisionmakers through a Town Hall event featuring state and local leaders.
4. Building awareness of Sesame Street resources with families through social media ads featuring supportive caregiver messages.

Efforts were centered on the central Iowa region representing six counties (Polk, Warren, Dallas, Madison, Marshall, and Story) to start and quickly spread statewide. Providers reached work with young children and families in these sectors: early care and education, health care, mental health, child welfare, and family support. Evaluations throughout the project guided activities.

This report captures the reach and impact of key activities over the past year. A special thank you to the many organizations and leaders who helped lead and implement these efforts. The Iowa Alliance remains committed to supporting partners with integrating messages and tools to build kids' social-emotional skills ongoing.

Key Outcomes

Our partnership with Sesame Street in Communities:

- ✓ Elevated work with many diverse stakeholders and aligned stakeholders around shared messaging and a focus on social-emotional well-being of young kids.
- ✓ Highlighted the importance of social-emotional learning to families, providers, and influencers at the most critical time during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Prepared providers and parents to talk openly about mental health and social-emotional development—and saw them do so in rapidly increasing numbers.
- ✓ Created a desire for statewide buy-in across networks, as well as opportunities to advocate for broader changes that support children's healthy development.



IOWA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY KIDS PARTNERS

Thank you to Kellogg Foundation, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and Polk County Decategorization for funding this work. The initiative has been guided by representatives with the following organizations coordinated by Iowa ACEs 360:

- Common Good Iowa
- Early Childhood Iowa
- Iowa ACEs 360
- Iowa Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- Mid-Iowa Health Foundation
- Orchard Place
- Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
- Project LAUNCH
- United Way of Central Iowa
- UnityPoint Health – Blank Children's Hospital

Many additional implementation partners have led this effort with us. Learn more at www.iowaallianceforhealthykids.org.

Initiative Reach

TOTAL IOWA ORGANIZATIONS
ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES

324

TOTAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN CENTRAL IOWA

146

ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED BY REGION

This map represents the level of organizational engagement in Iowa Alliance activities by regions of the state. Because some organizations overlap several regions, exact numbers are not provided.



Less than 10

150

ENGAGEMENT BY ACTIVITY

- **1,391** providers received training from Abby's Ambassadors on Sesame Street in Communities topics and resources.
- **20,324** materials were distributed to children and families through provider networks. Items include lesson plans, family activity bags, activity books, rack card handouts, and posters.
- **35,956** Comfy-Cozy Nest books were distributed by organizations.
- **389** individuals registered for a virtual Launch Event in October 2020.
- **487** individuals registered for the virtual Iowa Town Hall in January 2021.
- **32,934** impressions were made of supportive caregiver messages on partner organizations' social media during Week of the Young Child in April 2021.
- **1.6 million+** impressions of social media messages were delivered to Iowa audiences by Sesame Street in Communities.
- **23,000** SSIC.org users were registered from Iowa, a 115% increase over the year.

Outcomes from Evaluation Report

Fluent Research conducted an evaluation of the initiative in summer 2021. Findings were gathered from a survey of 172 providers from 108 organizations across the state and interviews with 17 participants (8 providers, 5 parents, and 4 system leaders).

Providers feel that the Sesame Street in Communities (SSIC) resources will have a positive impact on the work they do and the populations they work with, especially with increased openness to discuss mental health.

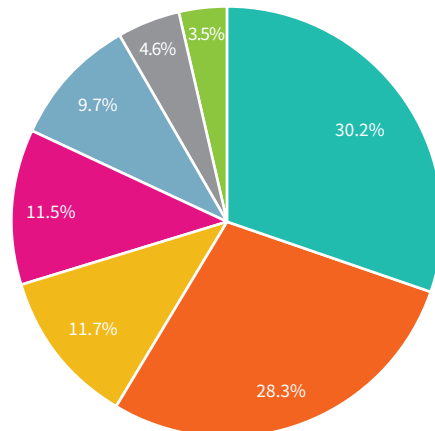
- ✓ Many providers were informed about the initiative in multiple ways, including email, virtual events, and social media.
- ✓ More providers are aware of the SSIC.org resources and are using them at a higher frequency and in more ways.
- ✓ Provider comfort about discussing social-emotional development with families increased and providers say SSIC will make it easier for them to support children and/or families on this topic.
- ✓ Families especially are more willing to talk about the topic because:
 - Discussions of social-emotional development became more open and urgent.
 - Parents were more eager to try relevant resources that would keep children busy at home.



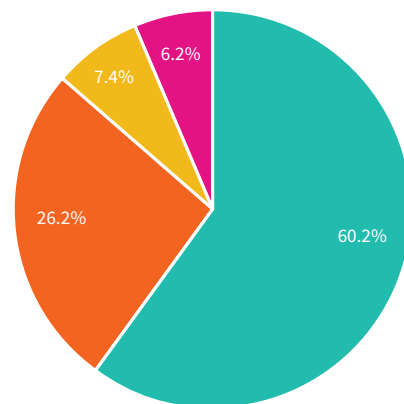
8 out of 10 providers

felt that the pandemic has made people more willing to openly discuss mental health

PERCENT OF ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN IOWA ALLIANCE ACTIVITIES BY SECTOR



PERCENT OF ORGANIZATIONS BY NUMBER OF TOUCHPOINTS WITH IOWA ALLIANCE ACTIVITIES (not including Town Hall)



ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE MOST TOUCHPOINTS

EveryStep
 MercyOne
 Des Moines Public Schools
 Orchard Place Child Guidance Center
 Blank Children's Hospital
 Child Care Resource & Referral
 FAMILY, Inc.
 Marion County Public Health

74%
of providers have used the SSIC resources with parents and/or children.

70%
of providers encouraged other providers to use the SSIC resources.