

South Central Iowa Community Action Program
Early Childhood Program

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ABOUT THE

# Community Needs







South Central Iowa Community Action Program - Early Childhood Program (SCICAP-ECP) completes a community needs assessment of South-Central Iowa annually to help understand the changing needs of the communities and people we serve. The five Iowa counties included in this community needs assessment are Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, & Wayne counties.

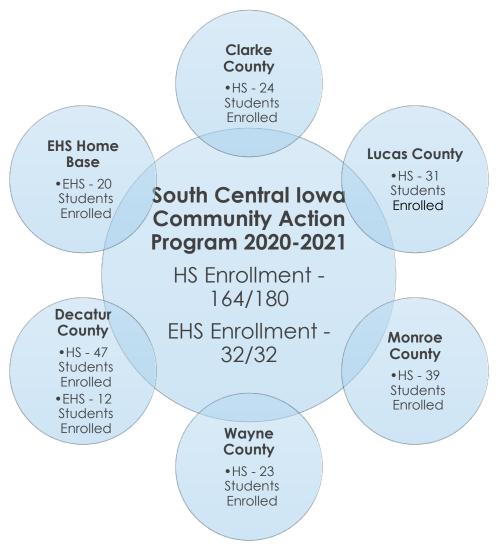
The 2020-2021 community assessment provides the most recent data available regarding demographics, early learning programs, disabilities, health and nutrition, social services and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected children and families in the south-central region of lowa. The information that is included in the Community Assessment is to be utilized to make certain we are meeting our communities needs by determining short-term and long-term program goals and objectives.



# Introduction

South Central Iowa Community Action Program – Early Childhood Program (SCICAP-ECP) provides services to children and families in 5 counties in South Central Iowa: Clarke County, Lucas County, Monroe County, Wayne County, and Decatur County. Our service area covers 2,360 square miles of Iowa's South-Central territory. SCICAP is federally funded to deliver services to 180 Head Start students and 32 Early Head Start students.

As of March 2021, the diagram below details SCICAP's 2020-2021 enrollment.



<sup>\*</sup>South Central Iowa Community Action Program provides an EHS home based service to all five counties, therefore, data from these home base programs are included in this report.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Enrollment numbers are down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are making certain that children and staff are staying safe.



# Head Start & Early Head Start Program Summary

Through center-based, home-based, and collaborative partnerships, SCICAP-ECP provides Head Start and Early Head Start services to 212 low-income children ages birth to five, their families and pregnant women within the five-county area. In 2019-2020, cumulative enrollment for Head Start and Early Head Start included 234 children, representing 223 families. In some families, multiple children attended the program. Children are served in five centers, five community school collaborations and EHS home-based options throughout the five counties we cover. SCICAP-ECP provides services in 18 classrooms, including 16 Head Start classrooms and two Early Head Start classrooms. Additionally, SCICAP-ECP maintains a waitlist with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and pregnant women.

Head Start programs promote the school readiness preschool-aged children from low-income families. Services are provided in a variety of settings including centers, family childcare, and children's own home. Head Start programs also engage parents and/or other key family members in forming positive relationships, with a focus on family wellbeing.

Early Head Start programs provide similar services as the preschool Head Start programs, but the services are tailored more towards the unique needs of infants and toddlers. Early Head Start programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching care. Promoting these four major domains of development prepares these children for continued growth, development and eventual success in their school and life.

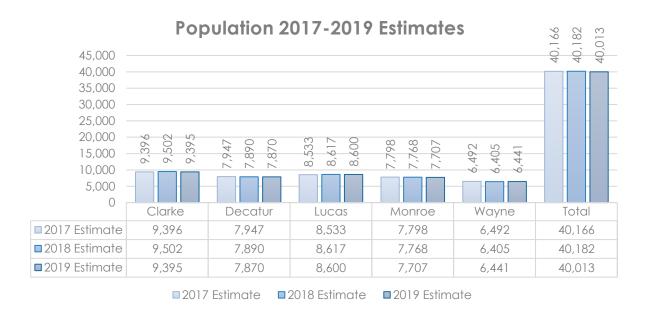




# **Demographics**

# Population Data

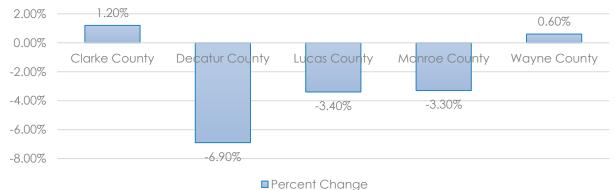
In July of 2019, the U.S Census Bureau released an updated census report to their data bank. This information showcases that over the past three years all five counties populations that we serve have stayed consistent with a very slight regression.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (July 1st, 2019)

Within the past 10 years, the county that has shown the most significant population percent change is Decatur County by a decrease of -6.9%. The county that has shown the greatest increase in their percent change is Clarke County by +1.20%.





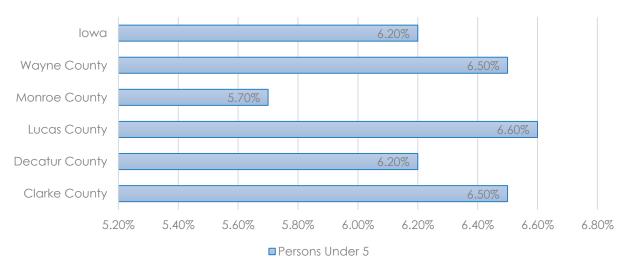
Source: U.S Census Bureau (July 1st, 2019)



# Population Data Continued

The graphic below displays the percentage of children in our five counties that are under the age of five. The greatest percentage of children under the age of five is in Lucas County at 6.6% with the lowest in Monroe County at 5.7%.

#### % of Population Under 5



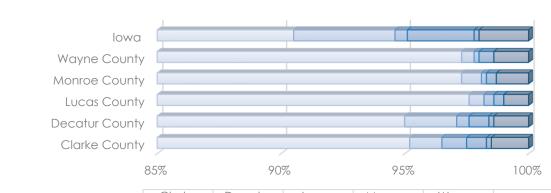
Source: U.S Census Bureau – Iowa County QuickFacts(July 1st, 2019)



# Race & Ethnicity Data

The State of Iowa's minority population in 2019 was 9.5%. This is three times higher than our five county-wide average of 3.5%. SCICAP-ECP's 2019 racial composition rates exhibit that our diversity rates are much lower than the State of Iowa's rates in all categories except for the Hispanic/Latino population in Clarke County. Clarke county's Hispanic/Latino population reached 15.40%, which is 9.1% higher than the State of Iowa's Hispanic/Latino population data.

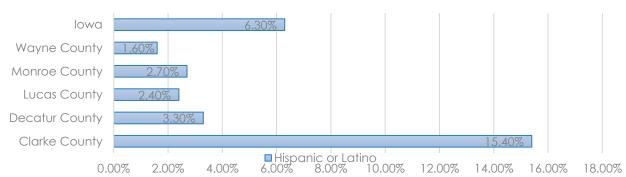
#### **Racial Composition 2019**



	Clarke	Decatur	Lucas	Monroe	Wayne	lowa
	County	County	County	County	County	1000
■White Alone	95.20%	94.90%	97.60%	97.20%	97.30%	90.60%
■Black or African Americans	1.30%	2.10%	0.60%	0.80%	0.50%	4.10%
■American Indian	1.00%	0.50%	0.40%	0.20%	0.20%	0.50%
■Asian	0.80%	0.80%	0.40%	0.40%	0.60%	2.70%
■Native Hawaiian	0.20%	0.20%	0%	0.00%	0%	0.20%
■2 or More Races	1.50%	1.40%	1.00%	1.30%	1.40%	2.00%

Source: U.S Census Bureau - Iowa County QuickFacts (July 1st, 2019)

#### Hispanic/Latino 2019

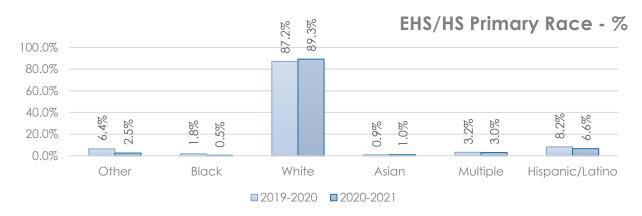


Source: U.S Census Bureau - Iowa County QuickFacts (July 1st, 2019)



# EHS/HS Race & Ethnicity

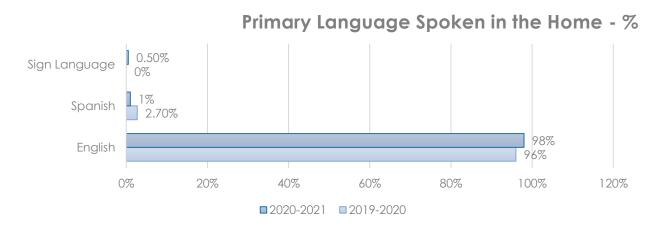
SCICAP-ECP's program race and ethnicity data continue to change showing a less diverse 2020-2021 school year than the prior year. Our programs minority population dropped by 6.9% from the 2019-2020 to the 2020-2021 school year.



Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data

# EHS/HS Primary Language

During the 2020-2021 school year, 98% of our student's primary language at home was English, 1% was Spanish, and .5% were utilizing sign language. English remains to be our student's predominant language in their homes. However, between this year and the year prior, our total number of Spanish-speaking families diminished across our programs by 1.7%.



Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data



## **Employment Data**

Unemployment percentages have been rising in not only our five counties, but in the State of lowa as a whole. Every one of our county's unemployment percentages went up in 2020 by at least 0.6% compared to 2019.





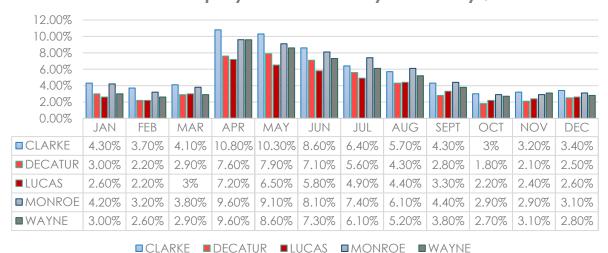
■Dec-18 ■Dec-19 ■Dec-20

Source: Iowa Workforce Development – Unemployment Rate by County (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

2020 has been especially hard on all five of our community's unemployment rates as the COVID-19 pandemic hit the State of Iowa. The job market drastically fluctuated across the United States. The graph below illustrates how the pandemic specifically affected our five counties unemployment rates. The months that hit our communities the hardest were April and May when the United States entered lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As we have gone further into 2020, the unemployment rates have steadily declined.

Before the COVID-19 virus was officially in the State of Iowa, South-Central Iowa was already struggling with employment rates. Nevertheless, this pandemic did not change the scarcity of well-paying jobs within South-Central Iowa. Many of the families we serve are forced to work multiple jobs or move to more populated areas such as the metro Des Moines area for better wages.

#### 2020 Unemployment Summary - Monthly %



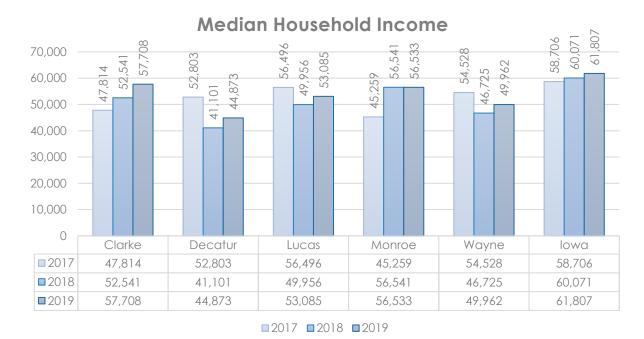
Source: Iowa Workforce Development – 2020 Iowa Labor Force Summary (Seasonally Adjusted)



#### Household Income

We do not have any updated Median Household Income as of March 2021 that indicates how our counties incomes were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the United States Census Bureau that was published in July 2019 indicates how the counties that we serve income numbers were increasing before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The 2019 average Median Income Level between our five counties was \$52,432.20 (this number is calculated before taxes are taken out.) The overall growth in the Median Income level for our counties amounts to be \$9,374.80 less than the average lowans Median Household Income. Monroe County's Median Household Income between 2018 and 2019 was the only county that decreased, which was by 8 dollars.

As our low-income families are working to make ends meet, it is essential to have secure and educational options for their children such as our Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Low-income families often struggle to afford a licensed daycare or preschool.



Source: State of Iowa Data Center – Median Household Income



<sup>\*</sup>The information above is the most current median household income that was recorded before the 2020 Pandemic.

# Cost of Living

#### Single-Parent Families Cost of Living in Iowa 2019

Monthly Expenses	One Child	Two Children
Rent and Utilities	\$794	\$794
Food	\$392	\$655
Health Care	\$464	\$558
Child Care	\$565	\$691
Clothing & Household Expenses	\$294	\$360
Transportation	\$561	\$641
Monthly Total Expenses	\$3,069	\$3,699
Annual Total Expenses	\$36,833	\$44,394
Annual Before-Tax Earnings Needed	\$40,551	\$46,610

#### Two-Working Parent Families Cost of Living in Iowa 2019

Monthly Expenses	One Child	Two Children	Three Children
Rent and Utilities	\$794	\$794	\$1,064
Food	\$610	\$785	\$1,039
Health Care	\$727	\$798	\$798
Child Care	\$565	\$901	\$346
Clothing & Household	\$356	\$444	\$516
Expenses	·	•	·
Transportation	\$1,197	\$1,197	\$1,215
<b>Monthly Total Expenses</b>	\$4,250	\$4,918	\$4,978
<b>Annual Total Expenses</b>	\$50,997	\$59,019	\$59,739
Annual Before-Tax Earnings Needed	\$57,798	\$65,056	\$63,491

# Two Parent Families with One Parent Working Cost of Living in Iowa 2019

Monthly Expenses	One Child	Two Children
Rent and Utilities	\$794	\$794
Food	\$610	\$785
Health Care	\$649	\$687
Child Care	\$0	\$0
Clothing & Household	\$356	\$444
Expenses	<b>\$</b> 336	<b>\$444</b>
Transportation	\$1,020	\$1,020
Monthly Total Expenses	\$3,429	\$3,729
Annual Total Expenses	\$41,152	\$44,745
Annual Before-Tax Earnings Needed	\$46,163	\$46,201

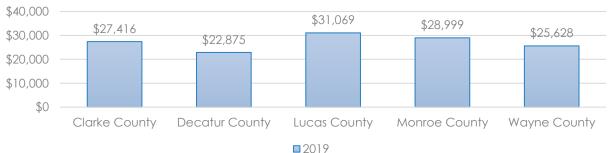
Source: Iowa Policy Project – The Cost of Living in Iowa – 2019 Edition



## Income Per Capita

Per Capita is a measurement of a populations economic output that accounts for each individual person within the individual county. This measurement more accurately represents the income of families within our program that are single parents or in a two-parent household with only one parent working. For each resident within our five-counties, our average per capita for 2019 is \$27,197.20 which is \$25,235 less than our five-counties average Median Household Income.

# 2019 Per Capita



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – County QuickFacts (July 1st, 2019)

# Cost of Living Explanation

When considering our five-county 2019 Median Household Income average of \$52,432.20 and our average 2019 per capita income is \$27,197.20, our families would have minimal to no money left for other expenses after covering basic living costs. This is based on the lowa Policy Project – The Cost of Living in Iowa – 2019 Edition figures.

This illustrates the significance of the available federal and state support programs for the families we serve.



## **Poverty Rates**

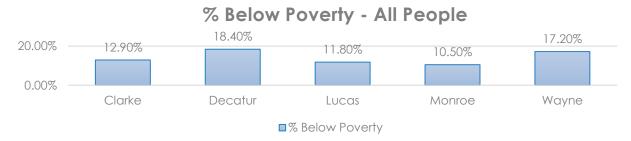
In 2020, the poverty guideline per household was changed to \$26,200 for a family of four. For a family smaller than four persons you would subtract \$4,480 per person in the household.

Example - A family made up of 3 persons the poverty guideline would be:

As the poverty line changes for smaller families it also changes for larger families. For each additional family member over the set four-person household guideline you would add \$4,480.

Example - A family made up of 6 persons poverty guideline would be:

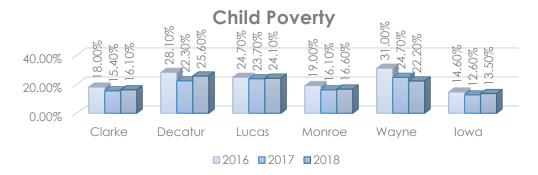
Our service area continues to be one of the most impoverished in Iowa. According to the Iowa Data Center, in 2019 a total of 11.2% of people were living below the poverty line in the State of Iowa. Across our five service counties, the average percent living below poverty was 14.1%.



Source: Iowa Data Center – Economic County Quick Facts (July 1st, 2019)

#### Childhood Poverty

As our service area's populations have stayed stagnant within the past three years, there continues to be a need for Head Start and Early Head Start services for children under the age of 5 who are living in poverty within our counties. Childhood poverty has been proven to have lasting effects on children as they grow older such as physical and mental health problems. Our five counties' average childhood poverty percentage is 20.92% compared to the state of lowa's 13.5%. This demonstrates how impoverished South-Central lowa is. Providing services to children within these areas will benefit the children's educational and physical development as well as support their family's well-being.

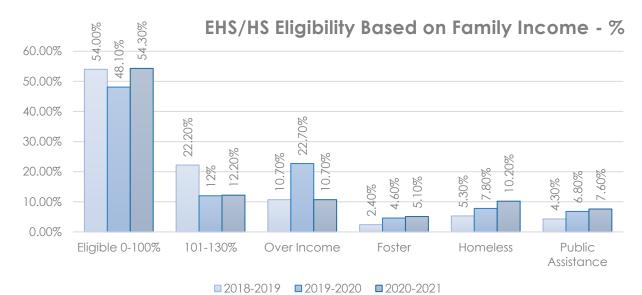


Source: Kids COUNT – Childhood Poverty in Iowa



# Parent and Family Program Data Overview

SCICAP-ECP is continuously working towards reaching children and families that are in need of childcare assistance for daycare or preschool. The graph below demonstrates this progress by presenting a growth in eligible children, foster children, homeless children, and public assistance children within our programs.



Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data

Out of our families that are enrolled in the 2020-2021 school year, 59.9% are two-parent households and 37.8% of them are single-parent households.

#### 2020-2021 Head Start/Early Head Start Family Data

2 Parents + Both In Work Force = 21.5% of Families

2 Parents + 1 in Work Force = 32% of Families

2 Parents + Both Not in Work Force = 6.4% of Families

1 Parent + In Labor Foce = 23.3% of Families

1 Parent + Not In Labor Force = 14.5% of Families

Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data Note: 3 Families Status' Unknown



# Eligible Children

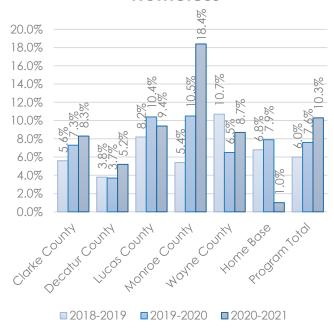
Children who are homeless or in foster care are 100% eligible for enrollment into the EHS/HS programs that SCICAP-ECP offers. Our program's goal is to serve these homeless and foster care children within our programs.

The data from the past three school years exhibits the gradual increase of homeless children that were enrolled in our program totals by 4.3 %. This gradual increase among our programs' totals reflects the mission of our program and staff by reaching out and effectively supporting this vulnerable group of children and families.

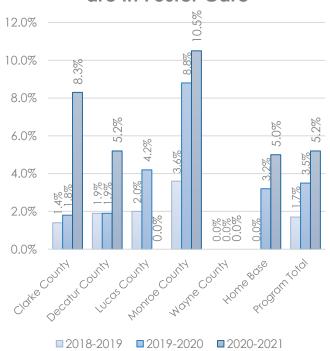
The percent of children in foster care within all our programs increased from the 2018-2019 to the 2020-2021 school year by 3.5%. The only county that continues to be stagnant is Wayne County at 0%.

Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data

# % of Head Start/EHS Children who Qualify as Homeless



# % of HS/EHS Children who are in Foster Care





# Childcare Availability

Childcare availability within our communities continues to be limited for families. There are 48 childcare facilities with a total capacity of 1,209 spots within our five-county service area. Not all these facilities are state licensed. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019, in total we have an estimate of 2,524 children under the age of five in our five counties. The graph below displays the limited amount of childcare available in South-Central lowa.

	Childcare	Childcare	
	<b>Providers</b>	Capacity	Population Under
County	(per DHS)	(per DHS)	Age 5 (Estimate)
Clarke County	16	442	610
Decatur	10	228	488
County			
Lucas County	6	223	568
Monroe	10	168	439
County			
Wayne	6	148	419
County			
Total	48 Providers	1,209 Capacity	2,524 Children Under 5

Source: U.S Census Bureau - Iowa County QuickFacts (July 1st, 2019)
Iowa DHS Child Care Provider Portal

These totals did not include public school preschool capacity. HS/EHS center capacity was adjusted to maximum allowable classroom size per HS Performance Standards versus DHS Daycare Licensing capacity. Not all providers are licensed and registered with the State of Iowa. Not all providers accept Child Care Assistance funding.

The Village in Clarke County has a capacity of 221, however, the center director stated that they are not able to enroll children anywhere close to capacity due to lack of employees.



#### **Disabilities**

As of March 2021, 34 out of 41 children have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in place. 29 of those children have an active IEP and 5 of the children have an active IFSP.

2020-2021 EHS/HS Disabilities

Disabilities	EHS	HS
Non-	5	10
Categorical/Developmental		
Delay		
Speech/Language	2	20
Impairment		
Emotional Disturbances	-	1
Down Syndrome/Non-Verbal	-	1
Autistic	-	2
Total	7 Children	34 Children

Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data

# **SCICAP-ECP Disability Services**

SCICAP-ECP has MOU's with Green Hills AEA and Great Prairie AEA to evaluate and support children who qualify for an IEP or IFSP. Our program also collaborates with the community school districts to ensure children who need extra supports are served.

The five-county service area includes a wide range of children receiving services provided by both early intervention providers – through a state-run regional system (Iowa Area Education Agencies/Early Access) – and preschool special education systems provided by the school districts. The school districts provide special education to preschoolers with special education needs within Head Start and other settings.



## Health and Nutrition Data

#### Health/Immunizations 2019-2020:

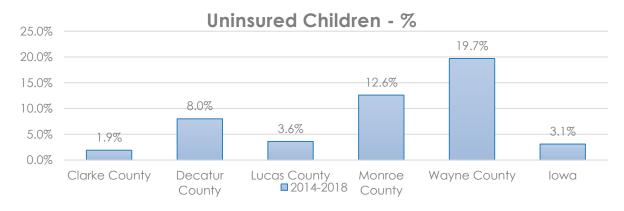
Head Start programs support children in receiving all vaccinations based on their age. SCICAP-ECP's 2019-2020 immunization data shows that 95% of our children who were enrolled in our programs have been fully immunized based on their age by the end of the school year. As more of our children become up to date on their vaccinations this will improve the overall health of our center and children. It will also help reduce the number of health-related absentees throughout the school year.

SCICAP-ECP's 2019-2020 up-to-date medical service data based on the EPSDT schedule indicates that 96.5% of all children in the Head Start program were current as of March 2020 before center closures due to COVID-19. 98% were considered up to date with preventative dental services.

Public Health provides no-cost immunizations in all five counties. Community Health Centers of Southern Iowa (CHCSI) is a federally qualified health center that provides primary, preventive health care services to those living in Southern Iowa. CHCSI provides comprehensive medical, behavioral, dental, substance abuse, vision, mammography, and in-house pharmacy. They also offer a sliding fee program to assist those who qualify.

#### Health Insurance/Uninsured Children

lowa consistently has had one of the lowest percentages of uninsured children in the United States. Clarke County is the only county that we serve that was below the state percentage by 1.2%. Wayne County's rate is more than six times the State of Iowa's rate. 97% of our enrolled children are currently insured. Of these children, 87% are cover by Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)/Hawk-I. Head Starts Family Resource Specialists work closely with our families when they are accepted into our program to aid in the families acquiring of insurance such as Medicaid or Hawk-I, as well as other necessary resources for their family.

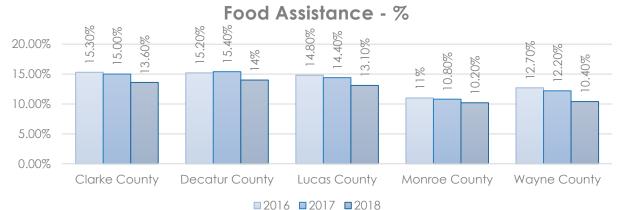


Source: Kids COUNT - Uninsured Children in Iowa



#### Food Assistance

The percentage of individuals within our five counties benefiting from the Food Assistance program has been gradually decreasing since 2016. Our county that has the most residents enrolled in the Food Assistance program is Decatur county at 14%. Continuing to familiarize this program with more of our service area residents may show a boost in the food assistance percentages while helping our residents become more financially secure.



Source: Kids COUNT - Food Assistance in Iowa

Most of our children receive free or reduced lunches upon entering the public schools. In the districts that we serve, the percent of free lunches fell in a few districts causing a -0.4% change in the total averages. Although, our percentage of free lunch recipients went down, the percent of students that are on free lunch is still 11.1% greater than the State of Iowa's average.

#### Free and Reduced Lunches by School District

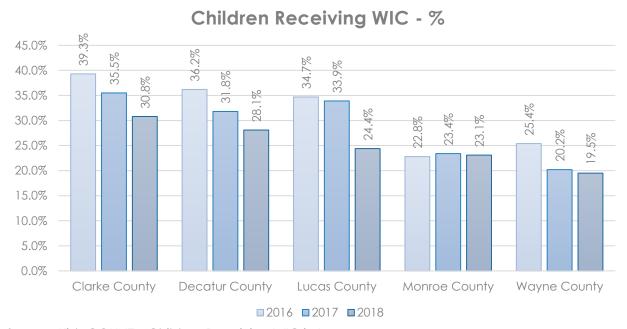
School District	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Albia	40.3%	38.7%	-1.6%
Central Decatur	59.5%	66.4%	+6.9%
Chariton	57.4%	54.7%	-2.7%
Clarke	59%	51.6%	-7.4%
Lamoni	59.5%	52.7%	-6.8%
Mormon Trail	55.2%	55.2%	-0%
Murray	46.9%	41.2%	-5.7%
Seymour	47.6%	59.8%	+12.2%
Wayne	54.1%	55.6%	+1.5%
District Average	53.3%	52.9%	-0.4%
State of Iowa	42.4%	41.8%	-0.6%

Source: Iowa Department of Education – Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) By District



# Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC is a Federal nutrition program for low-income women (pregnant or breastfeeding) with infants and/or children under the age of five. This program aids families in ensuring that they are receiving proper nutrition during the most vital times in their life. According to Kids COUNT, the number of children enrolled in WIC has steadily declined since 2016.



Source: Kids COUNT - Children Receiving WIC in Iowa

The number of children within our programs that are enrolled in WIC has raised by 6.7% between the last two years. Making certain that our families are enrolled within this federal nutrition program safeguards the health of our students and their families.

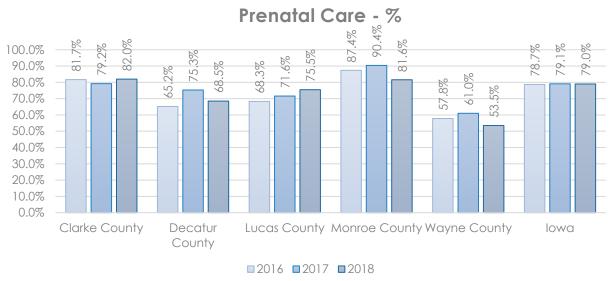


Source: SCICAP-ECP ChildPlus Data



#### **Prenatal Care**

Prenatal care is imperative throughout a woman's pregnancy to ensure the health and well-being of the mother and their newborn baby. In our service area, the 2018 average of mothers receiving prenatal care is 72.2%. Our 2018 average is 6.8% below the State of lowa's average of mothers receiving prenatal care.



Source: Kids COUNT - Prenatal Care in Iowa

#### Teen Unmarried Births

The quantity of unmarried teen mothers in our service area is scarce compared to the State of Iowa. According to Kids COUNT, there were less than five incidences in all five of our counties in 2018. The State of Iowa's 2018 average was 4%.

#### Teen Unmarried Births

County	2016	2017	2018
Clarke County	4.0%	2.2%	*
Decatur County	*	2.7%	*
Lucas County	2.4%	3.8%	*
Monroe County	*	*	*
Wayne County	*	*	*

<sup>\*</sup> Rate is not available as incidences of Five or less have been suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Source: Kids COUNT – Teen Unmarried Births in Iowa



# Summary

SCICAP-ECP serves a rural area that is comprised of some of the poorest counties in the State of Iowa. The populations are staying consistent; however, the poverty rates are remaining higher than the State of Iowa's poverty rate. With the higher poverty rates and an increase of unemployment came an increase of families using federally funded programs such as WIC, Medicaid, food assistance, etc.

For families with children to be able to go to work childcare is a necessity. The absence of childcare within our service area effects not only the children, but also the family's income rate. If there is not childcare easily accessible, it is difficult for our families to be able to go to work to gain financial dependence. Our five-county are continuing to have limited childcare access for low-income families.

# Strengths

Family and community strengths: Our EHS and HS programs are situated in rural communities where neighbors support one another. Teachers often can work with multiple children from the same family and stay connected with families as children get older. In addition, EHS and HS families refer one another to the program, thereby supporting enrollment. Families, many of whom are deeply invested in their children's learning and development, find opportunities to engage with their EHS and HS programs to learn from their children's teachers. Our programs are located in communities that have resources available that are supported by SCICAP-ECP and other social service agencies.

**Program strengths**: EHS and HS teachers along with their staff are key strengths of the program. In addition to promoting kindergarten readiness, our EHS and HS programs also offer supportive services to children and families, including health screenings, nutritional support and services for children while connecting families with resources to assist with housing and employment, for example.

**Systems-level strengths**: Local agencies that serve families and children share strong coordination related to referrals. This facilitates information sharing with family consent and ensures that families are connected with the resources they need. MOU's are in place with AEA agencies, school districts and county public health agencies.

#### **Recommendations**

As we move into our final year of our five-year grant for the 2021-2022 school year, we will be considering the option of converting some Head Start slots to Early Head Start center-based slots. Due to the stressor's families have faced related to COVID-19, we are waiting to see how enrollment numbers are in the upcoming school year before making this determination. However, we do recognize the potential need for more infant and toddler care to meet the needs of working families.

We will be consistently monitoring and assessing the impact of COVID-19 on children, families, and teachers. We will also maintain the ongoing monitoring and assessments of program and family needs to identify new areas for support during the pandemic and in its aftermath.

Teachers have expressed that they are experiencing increased behavioral challenges in the classroom. SCICAP-ECP will continue to offer additional training and professional development opportunities for our staff that is focused on trauma and behavioral challenges.

#### Sources:

Iowa Department of Education
Iowa DHS Child Care Provider Portal
Iowa Policy Project
Kids COUNT
SCICAP ChildPlus Data
SCICAP Daycare Surveys
U.S Census Bureau

