

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE IOWA'S YOUNG FAMILIES INITIATIVE Final Report, Federal Fiscal Year 2005

I. Introduction

This is the final report for the Young Families Initiative (YFI) of Prevent Child Abuse Iowa (PCA Iowa) for federal fiscal year 2005 (October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005). Financial support for YFI came from a grant of \$113,324 from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and a \$50,000 grant from an Anonymous donor.¹

The overriding goal of YFI is to promote early intervention and prevention activities that reduce the risk of child abuse in Iowa by developing and enhancing networks of community-based, prevention-focused, family support programs that:

- Offer assistance to families
- Provide early, comprehensive support for parents
- Promote the development of parenting skills, especially in young parents and parents with very young children
- Increase family stability and
- Improve family access to other resources and opportunities within their communities.

In this report, PCA Iowa will: (1) offer an overview of the YFI projects, (2) summarize their services, (3) describe how services benefited families, (4) analyze how participants evaluated the services they received, (5) detail the local support that YFI projects received, and (6) provide demographic information on the families served.

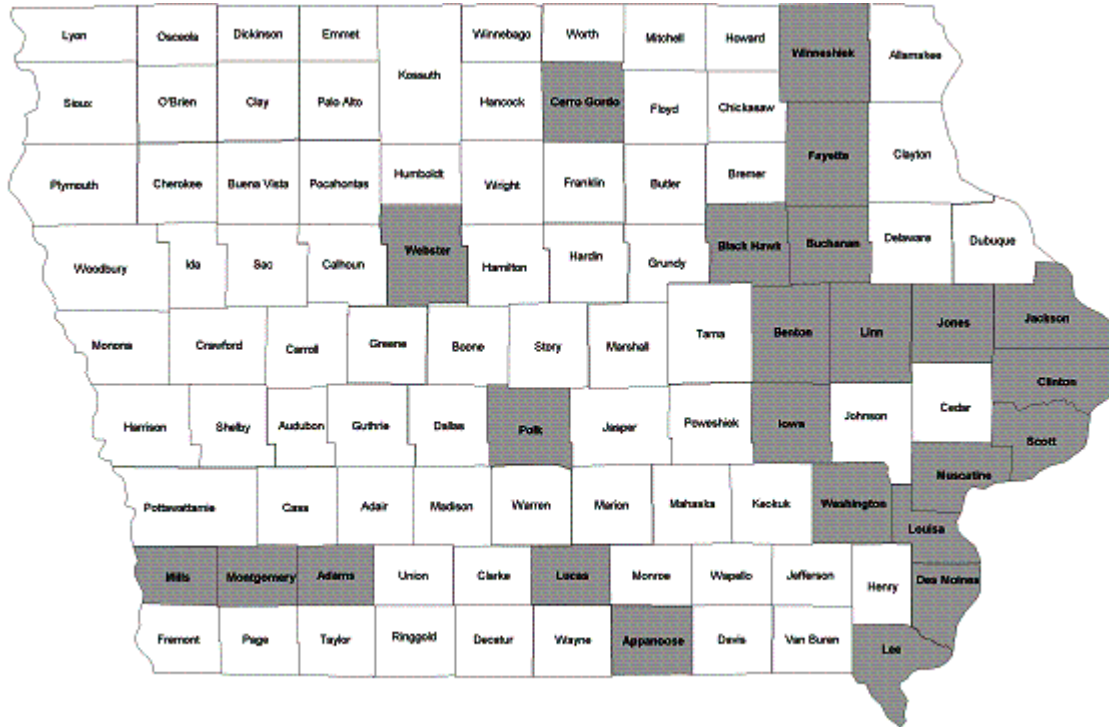
II. Overview of the Young Families Initiative Projects

PCA Iowa delivered YFI services through its extensive network of local child abuse prevention councils. Using a statewide RFP process described in the April 2005 quarterly report, PCA Iowa awarded \$142,300 in grants to councils for services in 24 counties. Grants ranged from a low of \$1,500 (Scott County) to a high of \$8,000 (Fayette, Mills, Montgomery, Polk and Winneshiek counties).² The April 2005 YFI progress report contained a list of the grant review results. A map of the counties that received funding for YFI services is on the next page.

¹ The DHS funds are a portion of Iowa's annual allocation from the federal Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect program (CBCAP), which is part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

² Because of a major reduction in federal funding for YFI, councils could only receive a maximum of \$8,000.

Counties with YFI Projects in Federal Fiscal Year 2005



Note: YFI counties are shaded in gray

All of the YFI grants supported parent education projects targeted at families with young children, but they varied in intensity, curricula, structure, and place of delivery (i.e., group- or home-based). Following is a summary of each of the projects, grouped according to their type.

Nests

The *Nest* is a parenting program primarily for families who are pregnant and/or have children under three. Families are encouraged to receive early prenatal care and consistent health care for their children and attend parenting classes once a week. Points are given for attending parenting classes, and the families “buy” baby items with the points they earn.

PCA Iowa provided varying levels of support to Nest projects in these five counties: Appanoose (\$3,000), Des Moines (\$7,500), Lee (\$7,000), Lucas (\$5,000), and Mills (\$8,000). Some projects particularly targeted their services to under-served populations. For instance, the Des Moines County project did outreach to fathers – including offering a father-only class. Louisa County’s project focused its work on Spanish-speaking parents.

In-Home Parent Education

Adams County (\$7,000): This county's *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* project, which it called "Parents in Charge," provided family support and education for families with very young children. The program focused on providing instruction for mothers under 20 years old.

Buchanan County (\$7,800): This project provided in-home Bavolek *Nurturing Program* instruction as often as weekly. Many families came from the council's crisis nursery program. The project sought to improve parenting skills and reduce child abuse by providing parent education, emotional support, information on healthy child development, skills for coping with the demands of nurturing child care, and assistance in accessing community services.

Cerro Gordo County (\$5,000): Trained project family support workers offered in-home parenting instruction on child development, parenting skills, and healthy parent/child relationships. The workers also advised and supported families in using community resources.

Montgomery County (\$8,000): This council project provided home-based instruction, using the *Parents as Teachers* curriculum, primarily for teen or Hispanic families or parents of children with a disability. The project also offered parent groups and completed developmental screenings. Its goals were to enhance parental competence and confidence, increase parental knowledge of child development, and promote a strong parent-child relationship.

Washington County (\$4,000): The council used the *PAT* curriculum for this in-home project, which targeted families with children under three years of age. The focus of project efforts was to involve Hispanic-speaking parents by using a Spanish-speaking instructor trained in *PAT*.

Group Parenting Instruction

Clinton and Jackson counties (\$4,000 each): These two projects (called *Parent Connection*) offered education classes for families with young children. They held classes in different locations throughout the counties, including transitional housing, child care centers, and low-income housing. They covered a range of topics and offered social opportunities for parents.

Muscatine County (\$4,500): The council hosted weekly support groups for young mothers and fathers and another support group for Spanish-speaking mothers. The project sought to strengthen parenting skills and produce a sense of self-sufficiency.

Polk County (\$8,000): The council hosted different parenting class sessions in the county. These sessions included parenting classes for Hispanic families, mothers in the Women's Residential Correctional Facility who are transitioning to parole, and parents of young children who live in inner-city Des Moines.

Scott County (\$1,500): This project offered classes for fathers, following the national *Boot Camp for Dads* program. Its workshops stressed bonding with and caring for a baby, dealing with the baby's crying, creating a safe environment, and understanding the partner's emotional needs.

Webster County (\$4,000): This council's *Dads Make a Difference* project offered parenting information to fathers in the county. It accomplished this by holding weekly father support meetings.

In-home and Group-based Parenting Instruction

Benton and Iowa (\$6,500 each) and Jones and Linn counties (\$7,500 each): These *PAT* projects offered early childhood parent education and family support. They served families with children who were under five years old, whose parents were either (1) less than 22 years old, mentally ill, developmentally delayed, or subjects of a DHS child abuse assessment or (2) older than 21 years old with high risk factors. Through home visits, projects offered instruction on child development, described how to encourage child learning and manage behavior, and promoted strong parent-child relationships. The projects also hosted group meetings and family activities.

Black Hawk County (\$6,000): This project provided in-home and group-based instruction to young parents. The group sessions included a range of topics related to self-sufficiency and parenting. Families who wanted extra education and support received home visits.

Fayette County (\$8,000): This project offered comprehensive parent education services to parents under 25 years old. The program used the *PAT* curriculum. Parents received home- and group-based education intended to foster parenting skills and competence; promote knowledge of child development, health, and safety; enhance parent-child interactions; and decrease the likelihood of abuse and neglect. Children also received developmental assessments.

Year-long Parent Support

Winneshiek County (\$8,000): This project included county-wide playgroups and a twice-monthly support group for pregnant teens and young parents. It sought to increase positive parenting skills, enhance knowledge of age appropriate behaviors, and reduce family isolation.

III. Program Services

Table One (next page) summarizes the parent education and support services that YFI projects provided in federal fiscal year 2005. Councils provided parenting instruction and support to 1,689 parents with 2,167 children. Six projects served more than 100 parents: Muscatine (263), Jackson (182), Montgomery (153), Polk (153), Des Moines (123), and Lee (102). Almost 90 percent of the parents completed their instruction.

Parents received instruction in 1,166 group and 4,286 in-home sessions. Muscatine (109), Fayette (108), Louisa (102), and Des Moines (95) counties hosted the most group classes. Montgomery (1,364), Linn (680), Iowa (584), Benton (463), and Jones (324) taught the most in-home classes.

Councils received 4,986 hours of help from 558 volunteers. Des Moines County received 827 hours of donated time from 33 volunteers, 75 volunteers contributed 760 hours of help to Linn County, and Lucas County benefited from 700 hours of help from 80 volunteers.

TABLE ONE
YFI Services in Fiscal Year 2005

<i>Councils</i>	<i>Funds received</i>	<i>No. of parents</i>	<i>No. of children</i>	<i>Group parenting classes</i>	<i>In-home parenting classes</i>	<i>Program completion</i>			<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Volunteer hours</i>
						<i>Parents completing</i>	<i>Parents not completing</i>	<i>Percent completing</i>		
Adams	\$7,000	10	12	15	112	9	1	90.0%	17	70
Appanoose	\$3,000	42	39	39	33	NA	NA	NA	12	45
Benton	\$6,500	21	23	40	463	18	3	85.7%	7	54
Black Hawk	\$6,000	71	85	41	73	71	0	100.0%	5	97
Buchanan	\$7,800	13	15	0	197	13	0	100.0%	14	49
Cerro Gordo	\$5,000	11	16	0	194	10	1	90.9%	12	150
Clinton	\$4,000	55	80	13	0	51	4	92.7%	18	120
Des Moines	\$7,500	123	163	95	0	123	0	100.0%	33	827
Fayette	\$8,000	29	23	108	191	29	0	100.0%	11	87
Iowa	\$6,500	18	24	38	584	13	5	72.2%	5	82
Jackson	\$4,000	182	152	41	0	155	27	85.2%	24	65
Jones	\$7,500	19	19	41	324	17	2	89.5%	3	40
Lee	\$7,000	102	111	50	0	102	0	100.0%	73	331
Linn	\$7,500	46	50	40	680	27	19	58.7%	75	760
Louisa	\$4,000	44	78	102	0	44	0	100.0%	31	195
Lucas	\$5,000	90	183	60	19	78	12	86.7%	80	700
Mills	\$8,000	88	91	13	0	85	3	96.6%	19	202
Montgomery	\$8,000	153	217	4	1,364	NA	NA	NA	54	155
Muscatine	\$4,500	263	280	109	0	263	0	100.0%	6	558
Polk	\$8,000	153	315	60	0	94	59	61.4%	14	144
Scott	\$1,500	26	26	6	0	26	0	100.0%	9	40
Washington	\$4,000	9	8	62	48	9	0	100.0%	23	46
Webster	\$4,000	62	93	37	4	62	0	100.0%	7	90
Winneshiek	\$8,000	59	64	152	0	42	17	71.2%	6	80
TOTALS	\$142,300	1,689	2,167	1,166	4,286	1,341	153	89.8%	558	4,986

* Second quarter figures; program ceased operation during the year.

IV. The Impact on Individual Families of YFI Services

A basic premise of YFI is that child abuse is preventable and that children can be made safe from it. Almost all parents love their children, wish to be good parents, and do not want to abuse their children. Unfortunately, some parents are socially isolated, have few resources to help them through difficult times, face stresses with which they cannot cope, or lack important

parenting skills. Parents in these circumstances are more likely to abuse their children.

Instead of waiting for child abuse to occur and then trying to treat its effects, YFI projects provide families with appropriate and timely social support and education to reduce the risk of abuse. Social support breaks down the isolation that many parents experience and helps them build necessary connections with other adults. Education teaches parents how to communicate effectively and manage better their children's behavior.

In three notable ways, projects furthered these family-building goals:

1. Parents learned effective, positive parenting skills. Almost all projects instructed parents on how to discipline their children positively and manage their behavior better. Projects noted several instances where such instruction "took hold," leading to significant improvement in parenting:

- Buchanan County families shared the following remarks about changes this program has had in their lives:

I think that the home visitations have been great. I have learned a lot on handling stress with young children.

Overall, I think it showed me some techniques. When my daughter would cry, I knew to be calm and care for her.

This program has taught me to play with my son in different ways, and it has taught me to discipline him the right way.

It has given me a chance to ask someone questions I might have about my child and how to better take care of him. I like getting many different ways to handle situations, and then I get to choose which I would like to use in my own home. I like knowing that I'm getting advice that is current and up-to-date.

- In Iowa County, a mother was reported to DHS for slapping her child with a spatula. DHS asked the family's parent educator to increase her visits from monthly to weekly. After four months of weekly visits, the parent educator, along with the help of a Head Start teacher, helped Mom learn some practical discipline techniques. As a result, DHS dropped the case, and the parent educator returned to conducting monthly visits.
- After several months of taking her child to playgroups, a Jackson County mom's behavior has changed from simply sitting along the side to fully interacting with her son while he played. In addition, the mom and dad attended a five-week series of parenting classes, during which she actively participated in the discussion and hands-on activities.
- A Linn County couple, whose daughter was placed in foster care, has participated in the program since January 2005. In June, they were reunited with their daughter, in part due to the progress they made during their home visits.
- Surveys completed by Scott County program participants indicated the following: 90% of dads reported feeling more confident about their ability to effectively deal with their crying baby and bond with their baby; 84% reported they felt more confident in being able to create a safe environment for their baby. All program participants reported they would recommend the workshop to others.

2. Parents made significant changes that reduced the risk of abuse. Projects reported several instances where families took important steps to reduce the risk of child abuse:

- An Adams County mom, who lives with her parents, initially discussed tension with her parents that was affecting the welfare of her child. After participating in the project, she now reports finding common ground with her parents on many of these issues.
- In Benton County, two young children were placed in foster care due to their parents' illegal drug use. Their removal seemed to encourage the parents to change their behavior. Since this incident they have worked with in-home care providers, participated in a parade, and sought intervention services for their son's behavior issues.
- A Clinton County mom, being treated for depression, found out she was pregnant with her second child. She was new to the area, and her husband worked 75 to 90 hours per week. She decided to discontinue chemical treatment for her depression for fear of harming her unborn child. She was, however, connected with the Clinton County program and received home visits and participated in a playgroup. After attending several playgroups and not missing a single home visit, she and her husband remarked how these helped ease her loneliness and positively impacted her life.
- Many of the young people in Lee County's program struggled with financial issues contributing to family stress. Because of this, the program invited a local banker to talk with families about getting out of debt and building good credit. The activities included setting savings goals, improving credit scores, tracking income and expenses and reducing finance-related stress. After participating in these activities, couples reported experiencing less stress and working better together towards financial stability.

3. Parents built social and community connections. Projects sought to reduce the risk of abuse by addressing one cause of it – social isolation. They succeeded in several instances:

- Black Hawk County's project played an important role in assisting and encouraging young parents to continue their education and/or obtain a minimum of part-time employment. Ninety-six percent of the parents that attended the weekly parent education and support group were either employed or attending school. For example, one mom enrolled at a local community college. With the assistance of staff, the mom toured the campus and met with a financial aid counselor. In addition, staff accessed local resources to help this mom secure child care.
- A Hispanic family in Fayette County has participated in home visits for several years. During this time, the mother taught herself and her son how to speak English, recruited three other Hispanic families to the project, and translated materials into Spanish.
- Families in Louisa County said that group meetings were the high point of their week – providing a chance for time with friends to share stories and discuss family issues. The bonds these families made continued after the project, with participants holding get-togethers, sharing phone calls, babysitting and confiding in each other.
- One of Polk County's classes for parents with children ages birth to 5 has had so many participants that more classes will need to be added to next year's program.

- A Washington County family with two boys, one of whom is deaf, was connected with multiple community services. After accessing these services, the son who is deaf began to talk and learned many new words, for which Mom was very thankful.

V. How Participants Evaluated YFI Projects

PCA Iowa asked that YFI projects distribute and collect service evaluations on which participants could note whether they *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* that the projects:

- Provided helpful information
- Responded well to their questions and concerns
- Provided information that will help them be better parents and
- Made it easy for parents to participate

The evaluations also asked that participants rate their overall satisfaction with the projects and describe their own knowledge on several parenting topics *before* and *after* project participation.

Following are three tables summarizing the responses of parents to these questions. PCA Iowa received 643 surveys from the 1,689 participants – a return rate of 38.1 percent. Lee (92), Polk (91), and Jackson (81) counties returned the most parent surveys. Adams, Benton, Clinton, and Lee counties returned surveys from at least 80 percent of their participants. Muscatine (33 surveys) and Washington (9 surveys) counties returned service evaluations with different questions that could not be included on the table. Appanoose, Mills, and Scott counties did not return any surveys.

Table Two on the next page lists the participant evaluations of the four statements on whether projects (1) provided helpful information, (2) responded to questions and concerns, (3) offered information helpful to being a better parent, and (4) made it easy for parents to participate. Between three-fifths and two-thirds of respondents to each of the four questions marked that they *strongly agreed* that the projects had those characteristics; respondents gave slightly higher marks to programs for responding to their questions and concerns.

Almost all of the rest of participants *agreed* with each of the four statements. Of the remaining negative responses, none *disagreed* with the first statement regarding the helpfulness of project information, three participants *disagreed* with the second statement concerning the responsiveness of instructors to questions and concerns, one participant *disagreed* with the third statement about whether the parent received information that will make him/her a better parent, and two participants *disagreed* that programs made it easy to participate. No one *strongly disagreed* with any of the four statements.

TABLE TWO

Participant Evaluations of YFI Projects

Councils	Parents served	Res-ponses	Provided helpful information				Responded to questions & concerns				Info will help me be better parent				Made it easy to participate			
			SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
Adams	10	10	2	8	0	0	4	6	0	0	3	7	0	0	2	8	0	0
Benton	21	21	16	5	0	0	18	3	0	0	18	3	0	0	18	3	0	0
Black Hawk	71	23	8	15	0	0	8	15	0	0	4	19	0	0	5	18	0	0
Buchanan	13	10	8	2	0	0	9	1	0	0	8	2	0	0	8	1	1	0
Cerro Gordo	11	7	3	4	0	0	4	3	0	0	2	5	0	0	5	2	0	0
Clinton	55	54	25	29	0	0	28	24	0	0	25	28	0	0	26	28	0	0
Des Moines	123	6	3	3	0	0	5	1	0	0	4	2	0	0	5	1	0	0
Fayette	29	13	7	6	0	0	10	3	0	0	6	7	0	0	9	4	0	0
Iowa	18	14	7	7	0	0	11	3	0	0	6	8	0	0	7	7	0	0
Jackson	182	81	64	17	0	0	65	16	0	0	63	18	0	0	63	18	0	0
Jones	19	10	5	5	0	0	7	3	0	0	8	2	0	0	5	5	0	0
Lee	102	92	51	41	0	0	52	40	0	0	53	39	0	0	46	46	0	0
Linn	46	22	20	2	0	0	14	8	0	0	20	2	0	0	16	6	0	0
Louisa	44	18	15	3	0	0	16	2	0	0	17	1	0	0	17	1	0	0
Lucas	90	68	50	18	0	0	55	12	0	0	51	17	0	0	57	11	0	0
Montgomery	153	36	24	12	0	0	26	10	0	0	28	8	0	0	29	7	0	0
Muscatine	263	32	14	18	0	0	13	17	2	0	11	19	1	0	16	15	1	0
Polk	153	91	64	27	0	0	67	23	0	0	60	31	0	0	57	34	0	0
Webster	62	21	6	15	0	0	7	13	1	0	9	10	0	0	9	12	0	0
Winneshiek	59	14	4	10	0	0	4	10	0	0	4	10	0	0	5	9	0	0
Totals	1,524	643	396	247	0	0	423	213	3	0	400	238	1	0	405	236	2	0

SA= Strongly agree; A= Agree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree

Table Three (next page) lists the overall ratings that respondents gave the YFI projects that provided services. Two-thirds of the respondents (422 out of 629) rated their satisfaction with the projects as excellent. Another 179 respondents (28.5 percent) cited their overall satisfaction as *above average*, while 28 respondents (4.5 percent) marked the projects as *average*. No respondents graded the projects as either *below average* or *poor*.

TABLE THREE
Overall Participant Satisfaction with YFI Projects

<i>Counties</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Above avg.</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below avg.</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Adams	4	6	0	0	0
Benton	16	3	2	0	0
Black Hawk	10	10	3	0	0
Buchanan	8	1	0	0	0
Cerro Gordo	3	3	1	0	0
Clinton	24	22	7	0	0
Des Moines	6	0	0	0	0
Fayette	12	1	0	0	0
Iowa	8	6	0	0	0
Jackson	68	12	1	0	0
Jones	5	4	1	0	0
Lee	62	23	0	0	0
Linn	14	7	0	0	0
Louisa	16	2	0	0	0
Lucas	57	12	0	0	0
Montgomery	24	10	0	0	0
Muscatine	15	14	3	0	0
Polk	61	25	2	0	0
Webster	6	10	5	0	0
Winneshek	3	8	3	0	0
Totals	422	179	28	0	0

Table Four (next page) lists parents’ ratings of their knowledge before and after participation on managing child(ren)’s behavior, communicating with their child(ren), stages of development, ways to manage stress, and how to use community resources. Parents noted significant increases in their knowledge in all parenting areas, ranging from 1.30 for “communicating with my child” to 1.41 for “my child’s stages of development” and 1.42 for “how to use community resources.”

TABLE FOUR
Parental Assessment of Knowledge before and after Project Participation

<i>Councils</i>	<i>Res- ponses</i>	<i>Ways to dis- cipline child</i>		<i>Communicating with my child</i>		<i>Stages of. development</i>		<i>Managing my stress</i>		<i>Community resources</i>	
		<i>before</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>after</i>
Adams	10	2.56	3.78	2.50	4.00	1.90	3.80	2.80	3.60	2.50	4.10
Benton	21	2.48	4.24	2.52	4.38	2.67	4.33	2.76	4.05	2.19	4.10
Black Hawk	23	3.04	3.87	3.09	3.87	2.78	3.91	2.83	3.52	3.22	3.61
Buchanan	10	2.50	4.00	2.90	4.40	2.90	4.10	2.30	4.20	2.60	4.40
Cerro Gordo	7	2.71	4.43	2.71	4.14	2.43	4.43	2.29	3.71	3.00	4.43
Clinton	54	3.38	4.21	3.75	4.23	3.58	4.00	3.12	4.00	2.92	3.94
Des Moines	6	4.00	4.60	4.00	4.80	4.17	4.80	2.67	5.00	3.33	4.60
Fayette	13	3.23	4.62	3.23	4.62	2.85	4.69	3.08	4.54	2.85	4.46
Iowa	14	2.43	4.29	2.79	4.21	2.57	4.43	2.57	4.07	2.71	4.14
Jackson	81	3.40	4.40	3.68	4.66	3.47	4.55	3.31	4.44	3.17	4.53
Jones	10	2.90	4.20	3.00	4.30	2.90	4.60	2.90	4.10	2.70	4.30
Lee	92	3.10	4.51	3.12	4.44	3.28	4.54	2.90	4.27	3.14	4.51
Linn	22	2.18	4.82	2.41	4.77	1.91	4.82	2.09	4.68	2.45	4.59
Louisa	18	2.33	4.72	2.38	4.50	2.47	4.53	2.06	4.75	2.00	4.69
Lucas	68	3.22	4.57	3.28	4.65	3.12	4.63	3.26	4.39	3.01	4.48
Montgomery	36	3.42	4.58	3.53	4.75	2.91	4.81	2.86	4.29	2.75	4.44
Muscatine	32	3.00	4.23	2.81	4.03	2.94	3.93	2.64	4.10	2.79	3.86
Polk	91	2.79	4.57	2.93	4.54	3.02	4.58	2.75	4.36	3.02	4.42
Webster	21	2.90	4.24	3.05	4.19	2.62	4.10	2.65	3.95	2.75	4.15
Winneshiek	14	3.14	4.14	3.57	4.29	3.29	4.29	2.71	3.79	2.86	3.79
Totals	643	3.02	4.42	3.15	4.45	3.03	4.44	2.86	4.24	2.90	4.32

Participants also wrote comments about what they liked about YFI projects and suggested improvements for them. Appendix A contains samples of participant comments.

Participants greatly appreciated the project efforts to provide them with useful and timely information on parenting. For instance, a Clinton County parent said, “This program gave me a lot of helpful info on how to deal with my child.” A Fayette County parent also observed that, “I like how you get one-on-one communication – showing me what the children should be doing and learning each month.” A Polk County parent stated, “I appreciated leaning how to communicate with the kids and positive ways to discipline. I’m trying to give the kids choices to make and positive feedback on their decisions.” A Washington County parent likewise declared, “I appreciate the info on all but mostly what the child should be doing at his/her age and how

children respond to certain actions.”

Participants noted the quality of the instruction they received. A parent from Linn County declared, “I am more educated! I have confidence in making parenting decisions. I know what is going on in my child’s brain development and how his emotions affect him. It has made such a big difference to be educated on my child’s development. I am very grateful to be part of this wonderful program. It is so great and educational.” A Polk County parent further stated: “I personally appreciated the fact that the coordinators knew from experience what they were talking about and what they were demonstrating.”

Parents appreciated the respect and affirmation that they received from YFI projects. For instance, a Cerro Gordo County parent said, “I liked that they came to see us and listened to what I wanted. My home visitor really cared about us.” Similarly, a Des Moines County parent remarked, “I liked that everyone can talk and ask questions on what we are learning. Teachers care about what you are going to do.” A Jackson County parent declared, “The instructors really listen to your concerns and take the time to answer your questions.”

Participants appreciated the support other parents provided. In this respect, an Adams County parent remarked, “I liked being able to talk about the kids with people my own age,” and a Lee County parent said, “I think it’s a great place for parents to come to communicate and interact with each other.” A Lucas County parent declared, “The Nest gave me a family and helped me in a rough time get on my own,” and a Polk County parent stated: “It was nice to feel welcome. People were open to listening to my ideas and suggestions. It was nice to use other ideas and suggestions and have them work.”

VI. Collaborative Efforts and Local Support

YFI projects relied heavily on local support for their efforts. Table Five (next page) summarizes the extent of this support, with private and governmental agencies, churches, and individual citizens assisting in project design, publicizing programs, referring families, teaching classes, offering meeting space, conducting home visits, and providing child care.

TABLE FIVE
Groups and Agencies Collaborating with YFI Projects

Council	Organizational Collaborations/In-Kind Support	Parents and Citizen Volunteers
<i>Adams</i>	WIC and Maternal Child Health made referrals.	Volunteers and parents helped plan topics for group sessions. Parents helped identify gaps in service.
<i>Appanoose</i>	ISU Extension provided some home instruction; AEA, FaDSS, and PAT staff taught group classes.	Parents served on the Nest board and helped find funding for the project.
<i>Benton</i>	Empowerment provided financial support for PAT instruction. The program worked with Grant Wood Early Access to address gaps in service.	Volunteers assisted with group activities. Parents helped choose the programming and set group guidelines, put parent/child activities together, planned and facilitated group meetings, served on committees, and made in-kind donations.
<i>Black Hawk</i>	The YWCA collaborated with the council. Doctors, health clinics, social service agencies, and DHS made referrals. Pre-schools, child care centers, and schools publicized the project.	Volunteers were recruited from the local universities, and parents were encouraged to take ownership in the group by choosing the programming offered, meals served, and group rules.
<i>Buchanan</i>	The project received referrals from local schools, PROMISE JOBS, Operation Threshold, Head Start, DHS, a health clinic and a hospital.	Volunteers assisted in governing decisions and activities. Community members donated items needed by families.
<i>Cerro Gordo</i>	Mercy Hospital provided administrative support and offered a health screening for parents. AEA made home visits for families with children with disabilities.	Families helped develop programs and identified needs for community. Council board members helped garner support for program.
<i>Clinton</i>	WIC and transitional housing sites helped with recruitment; other agencies provided meeting sites. Agency staff spoke at meetings.	Volunteers prepared meals, provided child care, and donated monthly door prizes. Parents assisted with transportation and shared resource information.
<i>Des Moines</i>	The project was a coalition of 25 agencies, which made the project possible.	Volunteer members of the Nest Coalition assisted with planning and programming; a parent board assisted with planning, day-to-day operations, and stocking supplies.
<i>Fayette</i>	Local physicians, nurses, and community providers helped design the project.	Parents set family goals, selected group activities, evaluated the program, and participated in community events. Community members and the council's directors donated time for special events and assisted with office work and fund-raisers.
<i>Iowa</i>	Substance abuse council, WIC-Maternal Health, HACAP, hospitals and clinics, DHS, YWCA, ISU Extension, Lutheran Services, preschools, juvenile court, and a community college made referrals. Empowerment provided grant for PAT.	Families made referrals; volunteers assisted with program delivery and provided child care; parents and volunteers worked together for monthly parent/child activities.
<i>Jackson</i>	Community agencies helped with recruitment and provided sites for meetings.	Parents helped plan meetings and assisted with children.
<i>Jones</i>	Community agencies made referrals and helped address gaps in services.	Parents made referrals; community members assisted with group meetings.
<i>Lee</i>	Volunteer professionals taught classes. DHS, Promise JOBS, a community action agency, a women's group, and business organizations helped market the project. Referrals came from several agencies.	Volunteers collected donated merchandise, updated records, and helped stock the Nest store; participants helped in the store, do outreach, and assisted in fund-raising.
<i>Linn</i>	The project received referrals from other community agencies; Community Partnerships supported families and offered services. Empowerment provided financial support for PAT instruction.	Volunteers helped with child care and facilitated groups; a community club provided volunteers for group meetings; a business provided baby and infant items. Parents helped plan classes.
<i>Louisa</i>	The project received referrals from DHS, WIC, the community action agency, the Columbus Junction at-risk school, and public health; community agencies teach classes.	Local clubs donated items; parents shared child care responsibilities.
<i>Lucas</i>	WIC-maternal/child health, local physicians, churches, and DHS made referrals; AEA, PAT, ISU Extension, WIC, public health, and law enforcement provided instruction.	Grocery stores donated food; parents assisted with stocking the store and fund-raising.

TABLE FIVE
Groups and Agencies Collaborating with YFI Projects (continued)

Council	Organizational Collaborations/In-Kind Support	Parents and Citizen Volunteers
<i>Mills</i>	The project received referrals and program support from WIC, PAT, maternal health, Head Start. The local tobacco prevention coalition provided resources to help parents stop smoking. The maternal health nurse provided information and guidance.	Participants assisted with recruitment and provided support for each other. Volunteers assisted with management of the Nest and organization of parenting classes.
<i>Montgomery</i>	Agencies assisted with project recruitment and program activities.	Parents made referrals for Spanish-speaking families; families donated items.
<i>Muscatine</i>	Many community agencies informed people about the project and assisted with programming.	Volunteers assisted in the facilitation of groups.
<i>Polk</i>	Agencies assisted with planning and provided speakers. A church and community agency provided meeting sites and child care.	Parents initiated one of the classes; Spanish-speaking parents provide support for others. Volunteers assisted with meals and child care.
<i>Scott</i>	Community professionals made presentations.	Parents who participated in classes helped with subsequent ones. Volunteers facilitated classes.
<i>Washington</i>	Multiple agencies made referrals, collaborated on teaching, provided supplies, and organized meetings.	An advisory committee planned the project.
<i>Webster</i>	Several locations distributed literature on the program. Head Start and community action helped with programs and events.	Volunteers assisted with classes and support fathers. Teen volunteers provided child care.
<i>Winneshiek</i>	Empowerment and several agencies made referrals and suggested program topics. Churches and libraries donated space. Several groups provided funding.	Parents suggested topics and speakers and recruited other participants. Volunteers helped gather incentive items.

Table Six (below) summarizes the total in-kind and cash support that YFI projects received. In total, projects raised almost three times as much in local cash and in-kind resources as they received in YFI grant awards.

TABLE SIX
Local Contributions to YFI Projects

County	Grant	Cash	In-Kind	Total Match	% Match/Grant	County	Grant	Cash	In-kind	Total Match	% Match/Grant
Adams	\$7,000	\$1,687	\$729	\$2,416	34.5%	Linn	\$7,500	\$4,000	\$3,200	\$7,200	96.0%
Appanoose	\$3,000	\$2,181	\$900	\$3,081	102.7%	Louisa	\$4,000	\$0	\$8,392	\$8,392	209.8%
Benton	\$6,500	\$88,000	\$5,500	\$93,500	1438.5%	Lucas	\$5,000	\$735	\$7,040	\$7,775	155.5%
Black Hawk	\$6,000	\$28,095	\$4,125	\$32,220	537.0%	Mills	\$8,000	\$3,500	\$3,200	\$6,700	83.8%
Buchanan	\$7,800	\$2,625	\$8,439	\$11,065	141.9%	Montgomery	\$8,000	\$60	\$12,545	\$12,605	157.6%
Cerro Gordo	\$5,000	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000	60.0%	Muscatine	\$4,500	\$31,450	\$26,040	\$57,490	1277.6%
Clinton	\$4,000	\$700	\$0	\$700	17.5%	Polk	\$8,000	\$1,692	\$3,240	\$4,932	61.7%
Des Moines	\$7,500	\$17,863	\$8,050	\$25,913	345.5%	Scott	\$1,500	\$1,250	\$170	\$1,420	94.7%
Fayette	\$8,000	\$2,500	\$1,815	\$4,315	53.9%	Washington	\$4,000	\$2,165	\$1,275	\$3,440	86.0%
Iowa	\$6,500	\$76,000	\$5,500	\$81,500	1253.8%	Webster	\$4,000	\$375	\$465	\$840	21.0%
Jackson	\$4,000	\$750	\$0	\$750	18.8%	Winneshiek	\$8,000	\$2,626	\$4,238	\$6,864	85.8%
Jones	\$7,500	\$23,000	\$5,500	\$28,500	380.0%	Totals	\$142,300	\$299,611	\$129,581	\$429,193	301.6%
Lee	\$7,000	\$6,857	\$17,718	\$24,575	351.1%						

VII. Program Demographics

PCA Iowa requires that projects ask participants to complete family information forms; if two parents participate, they need only complete one form. This information helps PCA Iowa determine if projects are reaching young families, with a particular (though not exclusive) focus on those at greater risk of abuse because of limited income, drugs, physical or mental health problems, poor housing, family violence, or other sources of stress. It also used the results to determine if projects are involving families from minority or traditionally under served populations. A council-by-council summary of selected demographic information is in Table Seven (next page); a full summary of the responses is in Appendix B.

PCA Iowa received 814 family information forms. PCA Iowa asks that participants submit one form per family, rather than parent. Since both parents in a family may receive PE instruction, projects will not return as many forms returned as parents attending. Polk (133), Muscatine (116), Lee (97), Des Moines (70) and Lucas (70) counties returned the most forms. PCA Iowa did not receive any forms from Appanoose or Scott counties.

While YFI projects serve some older families, most beneficiaries are young parents and/or parents of young children. PCA Iowa expects that the average age of participating mothers is less than 26 years old or the mean age of their children less than six years old. For YFI as a whole, the average age of respondent mothers was 25.5 years, and their children's average age was 4.2 years. All of the projects met one or both of the age criteria.

YFI projects reached a high proportion of families who are low income, with approximately three-fifths of respondents noting that they received WIC and/or Medicaid. One-quarter of respondents marked that they received FIP support. (The actual rates are probably higher, as recipients often under report program participation.) Of the 708 respondents that disclosed family income, 391 people (55.2 percent) listed it as below \$10,000, and another 168 (23.6 percent) marked it as between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Approximately one-third of respondents (285) cited "inadequate income" and one-quarter (203) marked "housing" as sources of family stress.

Many YFI respondents cited other sources of stress, with an overall average of 1.74 areas noted. A total of 203 respondents (24.9 percent) noted "family relationships" as a source of stress. Another 90 respondents (11.1 percent) cited "alcohol/drug abuse" as a source of high family stress, and 86 (10.6 percent) marked "parental health/disability." Respondents collectively noted 196 instances of "special needs" of their children. (Since a child might have

more than one disability, the actual number of children with special needs would be lower.)

Councils attempt to involve minorities as much as possible in their projects. Several projects were very successful in these efforts; participants in five projects (Cerro Gordo, Louisa, Montgomery, Muscatine, and Washington counties) included at least half who were minorities. The overall result was a much higher representation of minorities in YFI projects than in the general Iowa population. Of those who responded, 28.8 percent of the mothers, and 37.1 percent of the fathers were minorities. More than two-thirds of the minority parent respondents were Hispanic.

**TABLE SEVEN
YFI Demographics, by County, Fiscal Year 2005**

County	No. of surveys	Mothers			Fathers			Family						
		Avg. age	% minority	% < h.s. grad.	Avg. age	% minority	% < h.s. grad.	Avg. child age	Special needs	Income <\$20K	FIP	Medi-caid	WIC	Avg. no. stresses
Adams	10	19.8	0.0%	25.0%	26.6	0.0%	0.0%	0.5	2	9	6	10	10	3.60
Benton	18	21.7	0.0%	100.0%	22.9	9.1%	36.4%	2.8	2	16	7	13	17	1.39
Black Hawk	12	29.8	8.3%	100.0%	35.3	33.3%	20.0%	4.4	8	5	6	10	9	1.25
Buchanan	11	19.0	10.0%	66.7%	22.5	0.0%	50.0%	1.5	2	9	4	10	11	2.64
Cerro Gordo	8	21.1	50.0%	25.0%	24.8	75.0%	25.0%	2.2	3	7	4	8	6	4.63
Clinton	45	26.3	8.9%	12.6%	31.6	29.4%	23.5%	4.3	12	37	27	32	24	2.31
Des Moines	70	23.2	23.5%	37.5%	26.8	28.6%	44.4%	3.1	19	47	15	42	47	1.19
Fayette	18	21.6	5.6%	22.2%	24.8	18.2%	27.3%	2.3	1	14	6	12	14	0.94
Iowa	16	24.7	13.3%	18.8%	28.8	0.0%	25.0%	3.0	7	13	2	14	15	3.06
Jackson	30	25.6	3.7%	26.3%	27.8	0.0%	11.1%	3.2	7	22	6	20	17	0.90
Jones	8	17.4	20.0%	22.2%	19.7	0.0%	33.3%	0.7	0	7	1	7	7	5.63
Lee	97	22.0	6.5%	29.3%	24.9	7.0%	28.1%	2.4	12	85	28	48	49	1.64
Linn	31	21.2	16.7%	20.4%	26.6	16.7%	27.3%	1.8	9	31	15	20	29	4.71
Louisa	26	28.0	95.5%	38.2%	30.4	82.6%	100.0%	4.1	2	9	2	11	14	0.15
Lucas	70	25.2	27.5%	9.8%	30.5	37.3%	25.0%	3.6	13	45	10	46	60	2.07
Mills	6	29.2	0.0%	0.0%	34.0	0.0%	0.0%	5.8	4	4	1	3	3	2.67
Montgomery	35	28.0	51.4%	23.1%	31.6	70.4%	46.2%	4.5	5	14	3	20	26	1.03
Muscatine	116	30.5	55.2%	12.9%	34.9	80.0%	40.0%	5.5	22	66	39	65	51	0.92
Polk	133	27.2	44.4%	42.7%	30.8	37.1%	32.3%	5.2	63	92	15	65	67	2.08
Washington	9	28.9	100.0%	0.0%	31.1	100.0%	50.0%	5.4	0	8	0	4	8	1.22
Webster	15	22.8	0.0%	0.0%	23.3	13.3%	6.7%	3.2	0	10	2	5	2	3.07
Winneshie	30	29.6	0.0%	1.7%	33.2	4.3%	0.0%	3.2	3	9	1	7	10	0.73
Totals	814	25.5	28.8%	31.3%	29.2	37.1%	31.8%	4.2	196	559	200	472	496	1.74

APPENDIX A
Participant Comments on
YFI Projects

Selected YFI Participant Comments

Adams

All my friends talk about partying and not their kids. It was nice to have a place to talk about the kids. This program helps me be a better mom. I have more patience with my daughter. I didn't always listen to the lessons, but, looking back, I would think, "Oh, yeah, they told me that." It helped me with other stuff like colic and car seats.

Benton

I liked being able to interact with other parents.
I really enjoy the topics that we discuss, and everyone is so supportive.
They always make time to help us and are great at answering any questions we may have.

Black Hawk

I really enjoyed the suggestions that were given on how to deal with certain situations.

Buchanan

I liked how they explained how to help discipline my daughter. The instructor told me about negative and positive labeling.
I appreciated the help with calming a fussy baby.

Cerro Gordo

Not only do I like it, but my kids love it. It helps me not to be like my mom.

Clinton

It really helped to relieve some of the stress that I had.
It gave me more information on how to deal with my 3-year-old.

Des Moines

I LOVE YOU GUYS.
I liked the people who weren't afraid to ask questions, and the teachers actually cared about our future and the choices we will make.

Fayette

I like the activities. It helps me have more ideas of what I can do with the kids. I get better ideas of where my kids should be developmentally and what they should be doing at their age.
I liked learning how to interact with my child according to her age.
They worked with my disability very well and helped as much with my questions and concerns.

Iowa

I really liked learning some simple things to keep my children entertained.
They are always very friendly and helpful.
I loved the tips they gave on disciplining your child.

Jackson

I really like all the visuals they showed us on how to keep children entertained.
I enjoyed learning how to make inexpensive toys for my kids.
I really enjoyed the whole program. The staff made the environment very friendly.
I loved the interaction between the children.

Jones

I really enjoyed the program. It really helped me to understand and interact better with my son.

Lee

I really enjoy coming and being able to listen to the speakers.

I really enjoy the different speakers and the activities that are planned for the kids.

Linn

I feel more confident about meeting my children's psychological and emotional needs as well as physical ones. It is wonderful help for new moms. The people are so nice.

I followed the instructor's advice and contacted my doctor for a specialist for my son, and that is good. I have more knowledge and experience to draw on.

It helped me interact with my daughter and understand how she is growing. You can learn a lot and get help with your parenting.

I have calmed down. My stress level has decreased. I enjoy learning about my children. This program is helping out many parents.

It helped me a lot to understand why toddlers and infants act how they do.

Louisa

I like that, when I have questions, I now have someone to talk to.

I really like it all. The staff was great. I feel better about myself.

I liked hearing everyone's different opinions and suggestions.

Lucas

Learning how to discipline my children was most helpful (3 responses).

I liked the different topics that were discussed. The variety of material taught was interesting and personally beneficial.

This is an excellent program for mothers. I wish my mother had gone to a program like this. Keep up the great job!

I liked the down-to-earth kid stuff that I need to know and should learn and do.

It's always helpful to have somebody ready to listen.

Everything in the program is really good. I like the things they teach us in all areas on raising our small children.

Montgomery

I really like the different activities for the kids. The handouts have lots of information I can use. The kids can't wait when they know our visitor is coming.

My son and I really enjoy the visits. The visitor is very helpful and encouraging to my son, and he is very comfortable with her. I like the homemade toys we make for him.

My child loves when our PAT person comes to visit. He is just overjoyed with the activities they do.

Our visitor has showed me how to help more with my son's progress. She showed us ways of playing to help him get involved more.

Muscatine

I liked learning how to raise and take care of my child.

I feel that participant language should be addressed. Not everyone wants to hear profanity.

I really like the workshops that we had, and I hope that we can have more. I also like the people I have met.

It is a very open group. Communication is great!

Polk

I like the suggestions we are given on how to deal with different situations in the home.

I thought the program was very informative and really down to earth.
I liked how nice the people were and how laid back it was.
I appreciated learning positive ways to discipline my child.
The class was very enjoyable. It was upbeat and everyone participated.
I liked the way the teacher helped us understand that discipline and punishment are not the same.
I liked that you got to voice your opinion, but, when you had questions, sometimes they didn't always get answered.
I can say that I know much more about being a parent and managing my stress since I've been here.
I liked the discussions when we got to give them a problem and everyone gave you input.

Washington

I appreciate the info - muchas gracias por todo.
I liked the games and activities because my child learned a lot. (trans. from Spanish)
Everything you taught me was perfect. (trans. from Spanish)

Webster

I thought the program was interesting and well presented.

Winneshiek

I liked having time to discuss our problems – setting goals and having the group to help achieve them.
My children love playgroup, and it feels good to interact with adults.
I liked just getting together to talk about difference subjects. The people are easy to talk to and make it fun.
I enjoy interacting with other parents and having different points of view about parenting.

APPENDIX B
YFI Program Demographics

YFI Program Demographics, FY 2005

COUNTY: All			NUMBER OF REPLIES: 814			
PARENTS			FAMILY		CHILDREN	
Age	Mother	Father	Household Assistance		Number and Age	
Avg. age of parents	25.5	29.2	FIP/welfare	200	Avg. number of children	1.9
Minimum age	14	16	SSI/Disability	83	Avg. age of children	4.2
Maximum age	53	54	Medicaid	472		
			Food stamps	359		
			WIC	615	Special Needs	
Race/Ethnicity	Mother	Father			Mental	39
Caucasian	551	304			Physical	36
African American	25	19	Annual Family Income		Learning/Behavioral	95
Hispanic	155	135	0-\$9,999	391		
Asian American	3	2	\$10,000-\$19,999	168		
Other	40	23	\$20,000-\$39,000	114		
			\$40,000 or more	35		
Marital Status	Mother	Father	Areas of High Family Stress			
Married	263	248	Housing	203		
Single	298	88	Nutrition/food	62		
Separated	37	15	Parent's health/disability	86		
Divorced	62	23	Child's health/disability	72		
Living with partner	97	91	Mental health	72		
			Alcohol/Drug abuse	90		
Education	Mother	Father	Family violence	55		
Some high school	224	134	Inadequate income	285		
High school grad.	280	182	Family relationships	203		
Some college	147	61	Transportation	176		
College graduate	66	45	Child care	130		
Employment	Mother	Father				
Employed full-time	141	295				
Employed part-time	146	47				
Unemployed	156	72				
Homemaker	146	2				
Disabled	47	16				
Student	89	20				