



Johnson County Empowerment/Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Community Plan

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Updated: December 3, 2015; October 21, 2021 Data Updated December 2016;

August 2017;

August 2018; October 2021; February 2025



SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Communities:

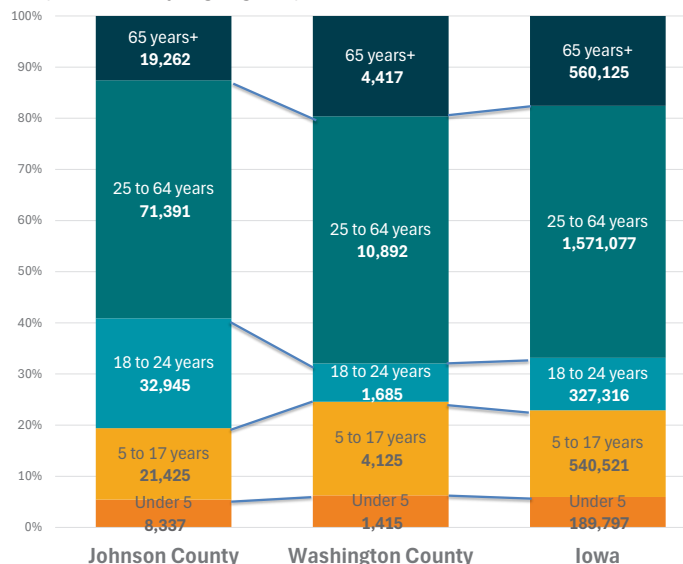
Johnson County encompasses **12 formal communities** with populations ranging from 723 people (Shueyville) to 75,678 people (Iowa City). Communities include Coralville, Hills, Iowa City, Lone Tree, North Liberty, Oxford, Shueyville, Solon, Swisher, Tiffin, University Heights, and West Branch.

While it is considered a “metropolitan county”, Johnson County includes both rural and urban communities. Within the county, there are three communities with populations over 20,000 people and four communities with populations less than 1,000 people. There is great variation in the available resources within each community, with many resources located in the urban Iowa City/Coralville area and not many services in rural communities.

There are approximately 157,528 people living in the county and approximately **8,337 of those individuals are under 5 years of age.** (2023 Census population estimates)

Johnson County has seen consistent population increases for several years; between 2010 and 2024, the total county population increased by

Population by age group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2018-22

20.4%. Among the state’s five most populous counties (Dallas, Polk, Warren, and Johnson) Johnson County has the second highest population increase.

North Liberty in particular has experienced rapid growth, with a 45.6% population growth from 2010 to 2019 and the highest percentage of persons under 5 years.

Though the county is more diverse than the state, residents are predominantly white (78%). The **county’s diverse population** continues to grow. Johnson County has a relatively high non-US-born population 10.7% of the population was born outside of the United States, compared with 5.9% statewide. For many residents, English is not the primary language spoken in the home. In 15.5% of Johnson County households a language other than English is spoken. In 2023-2024, there were 1,900 English

Language Learners in the Iowa City Community School District. In addition to the census tract racial/ethnic categories, residents represent many different cultures from around the United States and the world. Other than English, the primary languages spoken in the Iowa City Community School District are Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, and French.

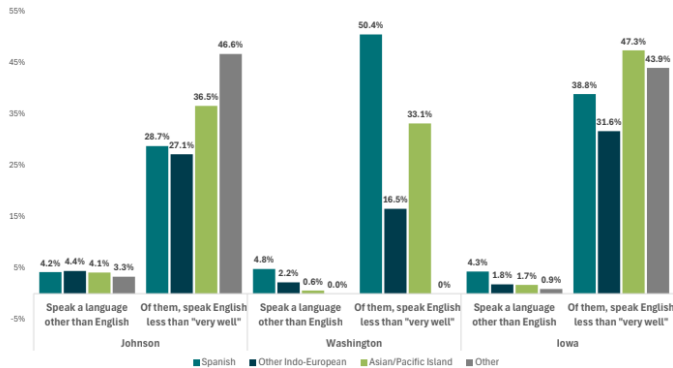
Percent of the population by race and ethnicity

	Johnson	Washington	Iowa
Hispanic or Latino origin, any race	6.7%	7.1%	6.8%
White, not Hispanic	80.3%	95.3%	88.7%
Black or African American, NH	8.9%	0.8%	4.3%
Asian, NH	6.0%	0.5%	2.5%
Two or more races, NH	4.3%	2.9%	3.7%

Source: U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2018-22

Johnson County is served by **10 school districts**. Four of those districts serve primarily Johnson County children: Clear Creek Amana, Iowa City, Lone Tree, and Solon. The other six districts have a majority of students from one of five neighboring counties but serve some Johnson County children: College Community (Linn County), Highland (Washington County), Lisbon (Linn County), Mid-Prairie (Washington County), West Branch (Cedar County), West Liberty (Muscatine County), and Williamsburg (Iowa County). Johnson County is served by Grant Wood AEA 10. Enrollment numbers vary between school districts; in 2020-2021 the Iowa City Community School District enrolled 14,264, and the Lone Tree Community School

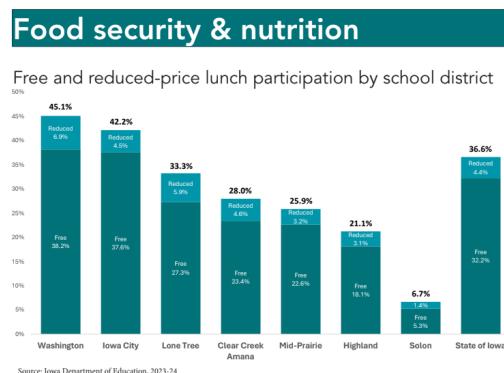
Percent of population 5 years and older who speak a language other than English at home and percent of them who speak English less than “very well”



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018-22

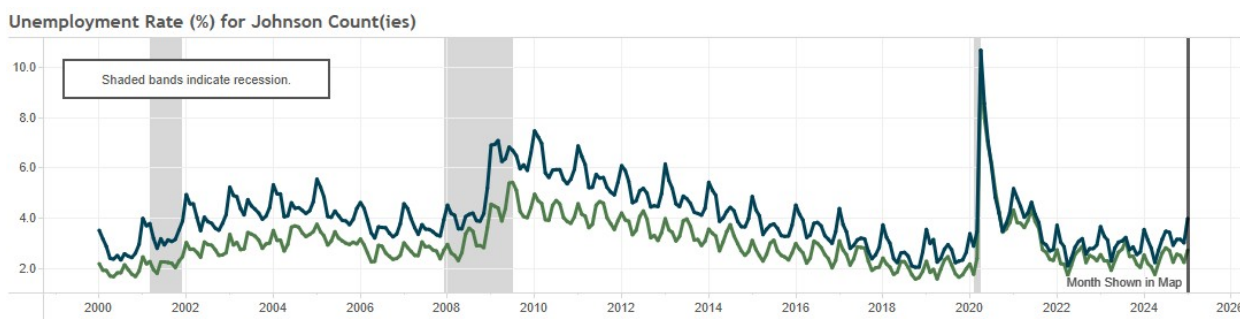
District enrolled 388.

All of the districts participate in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. The Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis Services, Student Reporting in Iowa 2023-2024 fall enrollment file notes 19,862 children aged three through 18 enrolled in school in Johnson County. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted school enrollment numbers in 2020-2021, as parents made difficult health and safety decisions for their children.



Compared to the state of Iowa, Johnson County schools have overall lower rates of eligibility for Free & Reduced Lunch. However, within the Iowa City Community School District, there is wide range of variability between buildings with rates ranging from 13.3% to 80.5% in 2023-2024. There are 11 ICCSD buildings with Free & Reduced Lunch rates greater than 50%. Child poverty is increasing in Johnson County. Similar trends have been seen in overall poverty and utilization of Food Assistance.

The **unemployment** rate in Johnson County is consistently lower than the state as a whole. Like most of the state, Johnson County saw an increase in unemployment between 2008 and 2009 and again in 2018-2019. Due to pandemic related layoffs, Johnson County experienced another drastic increase in unemployment between 2020 and 2021. There currently is an Iowa Workforce Development Center located in Iowa City.



Child abuse and neglect rates in Johnson County have been relatively stable. Though child abuse covers children ages 1-17, children age 5 or younger make up 49.7% of the victims of child abuse in Johnson County.

The most common type of abuse is denial of critical care (neglect), accounting for approximately 64% of confirmed or founded child abuse in Johnson County. The next most common types of abuse are dangerous substance, presence of illegal drugs in child's system (PID), physical abuse. <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/CPS/child-abuse-statistics>

In spite of a wealth of health resources, children's overall **health status** in Johnson County is comparable to the rest of the state. Rates of low birth weight, child immunization, and infant mortality are all close to the state rates. Johnson County presently and historically has had a lower rate of teen births than the state as a whole.

Johnson County is home to the University of Iowa. Other nearby education resources include Cornell College, Coe College and Kirkwood Community College. Johnson County is also home to the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics, and a Veteran's Administration Hospital.

Strengths and Challenges:

Johnson County is a **diverse county** in multiple ways. The county has diversity of individuals, diversity of populations, diversity of languages, and diversity of communities. Those aspects of diversity present both strengths and challenges for the community. The business community in Johnson County reflects this diversity. The percent of Black-owned firms, Asian-owned firms, Hispanic-owned firms, and Women-owned firms are greater than the state percentages.

One challenge of having a diverse population is the presence of many different languages. Not only are there many families who do not speak English, but they don't speak the same language as each other – requiring translators for multiple languages. For languages that are newer to our community, it can be difficult to identify high-quality translators.

Johnson County experiences high mobility in its residents. Many families move in and out of the county each year, and they also may move from one side of town (and school attendance area) to another. This can present challenges to providing services and measuring outcomes, as addresses and phone numbers frequently change.

As stated earlier, Johnson County has many resources available to children, families, and agencies. Students from The University of Iowa may volunteer or do their practicum or student teaching experience in local

classrooms. As part of their research projects, U of I faculty and/or students may provide direct services at no cost while the research is being conducted. In addition to the strong local school districts, Johnson County has many other agencies serving the needs of children and families including the 4Cs Community Coordinated Child Care, Child Care Resource and Referral, Open Heartland, Dream City, Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), Grant Wood AEA, HACAP, Neighborhood Centers, Prelude Behavioral Services, Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP), Shelter House, and United Action for Youth. The county is home to many organizations that assist in funding these programs, such as the Community Foundation of Johnson County, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Johnson County Decat, Prevent Child Abuse – Johnson County, United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties, and county and city governments.

Planning Considerations:

Demographic information is used in conjunction with needs assessment results to identify priorities for funding and planning. By understanding our community, we can better understand the issues that face us.

The Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA RFP states, “address program access issues, such as transportation, technology, language barriers and child care..” Organizations are encouraged to be creative and client-focused when planning. For example, the JCE/ECIA Board found that it is a more effective strategy to provide funding for before- and after-preschool care than it is to provide transportation for children to and from preschool. We strive to provide services in multiple locations around the county in order to alleviate some of the transportation burden on rural families.

Use of the Community Plan:

The Community Plan is a living, breathing document that guides the work of the local Early Childhood Iowa Area (ECIA) board and community. The plan is written so that an “outsider” can understand the early care, health and education system that exists for children ages 0-5 and their families within the ECIA boundary. The plan identifies community assets, common needs and gaps in services. It also guides planning and decision making, addresses sustainability, and helps set priorities in the community.

The Community Plan is the “roadmap” for the local early childhood system. In cooperation with community partners, other agencies, programs and services, the Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA board utilizes the plan to

assist in program planning, identifying potential collaborations, and in making funding decisions.

Community partners utilize the Community Plan as an information and data source when applying for grant funding, both from the ECI Area and from outside entities.

SECTION II: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Development of the Community Needs Assessment

The initial Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Community Needs Assessment was developed from data obtained from needs assessments and information from Mercy Hospital Iowa City, Johnson County Public Health, United Way/JCCOG Community Needs Assessment, Kids Count, Iowa City Community School District, Empowerment Family Support Program contractors' site visits, and United Way grantees.

As part of the ongoing needs assessment process, Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA solicits feedback from community agencies regarding available resources, perceived community and agency needs, and anecdotal information from families regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of services. Partners in developing and updating the plan include Iowa City Community School District, Johnson County Council of Governments, Johnson County Decat, Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA, Johnson County Public Health, MECCA (now Prelude Behavioral Services), United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties, University of Iowa College of Public Health, 4Cs Community Coordinated Child Care, and Central Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. Information received from community agencies is used to build more formal Needs Surveys.

In 2025, Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA developed an electronic Early Childhood Community Needs Survey to gather input about community priorities. The surveys were distributed via email and links. Respondents included child care providers and parents. This information, along with the information from the United Ways Community Assessment, and Johnson County Public Health Community Status Assessment Report was used to determine the priorities in the Community Plan.

Analysis of the Needs Assessment Data Collected:

Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA utilizes many sources of

information in determining availability and needs of services in Johnson County. These sources include:

Formal Needs Assessments for Johnson County	Other Data Sets
Iowa City Community School District	United Way grantees
Johnson County Public Health	Kids Count
HACAP	Empowerment Family Support Program contractors' site visits
United Way/JCCOG	Iowa City School District Early Childhood Task Force

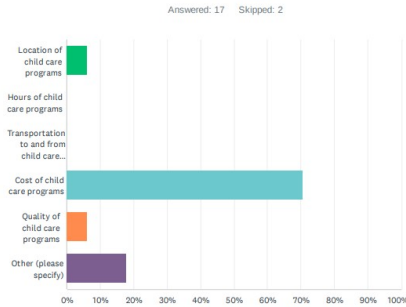
Along with JCE/ECIA Board members and contracted service providers, individuals representing Iowa City Community School District, Johnson County Public Health, HACAP, and United Way participate in the JCE/ECIA Ad Hoc Committee, bringing the results of their needs assessments to the group. The group reviews the needs assessments for information specific to early childhood (e.g. childcare) and for trends that are identified by multiple assessments (e.g. transportation). The results of all of those needs assessments are winnowed down to those most relevant to young children and their families.

2025 Needs Assessment

The 2025 Early Childhood Community Needs Assessment survey was completed by 19 parents and 36 providers. While most of the options were similar on the two surveys, there were some differences. When asked about the biggest barrier for finding child care, the cost of childcare programs was a concern identified by both families and providers. Parents also identified **quality** and **location** as other top barriers, while providers identified **hours of programs, transportation, and quality** as the barriers.

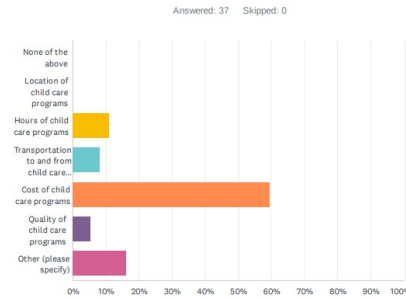
Parents

Q3 The biggest barrier to finding child care/early education for my children (ages 0-5) is



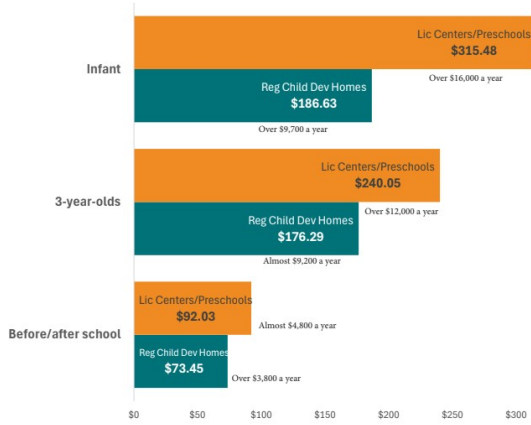
Providers

Q1 The biggest barrier the families I work with have finding child care for children ages 0-5 is



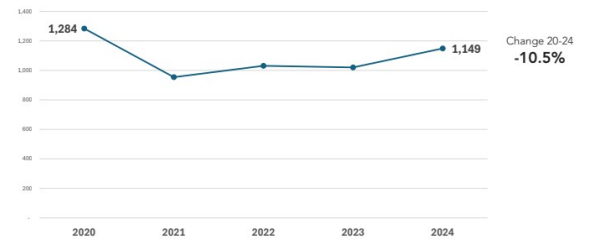
Johnson County

Average weekly cost of child care by type



Source: Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, November 2024

Number of children served by Child Care Assistance, FY 2020-24

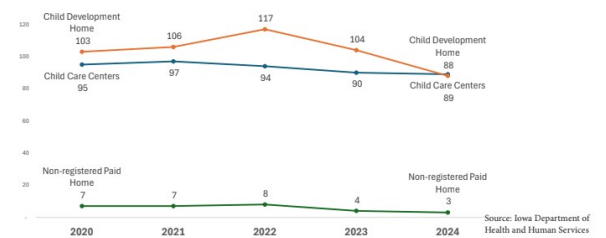


76% of children under 6 have all available parents in the workforce
U.S. Census Bureau

\$12.57 average wage of child care workers in Iowa City Metro
Bureau of Labor Statistics

\$703 average annual Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit claim, statewide
Iowa Department of Revenue

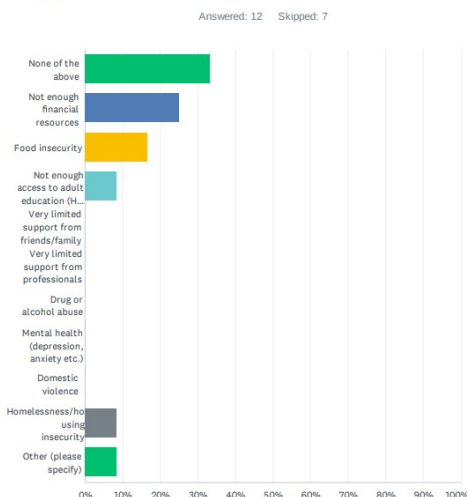
Number of providers participating in Child Care Assistance, FY 2020-24



When asked about the biggest stressors/ challenges for families in our communities both parents and providers identified **not enough financial resources, limited support from friends/ family, and food insecurity.**

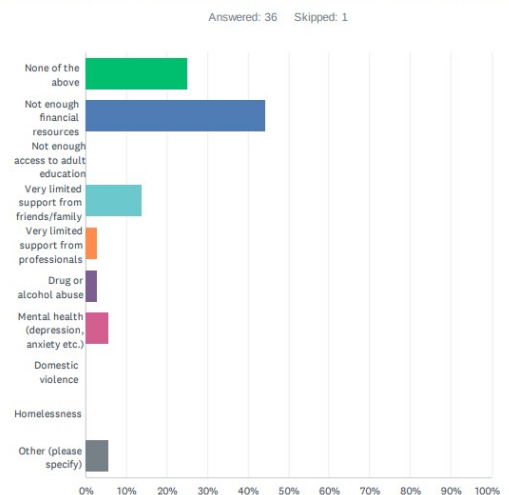
Parents

Q8 The biggest stressor/challenge I see for families in our community is



Providers

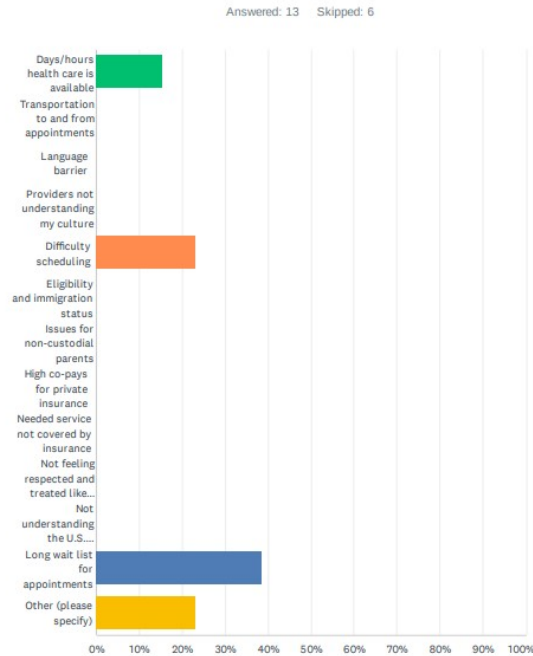
Q10 The biggest stressor/challenge for families I work with is



Both parents and providers expressed **long wait list for appointments** as the biggest barriers for families with children ages 0-5 in accessing healthcare.

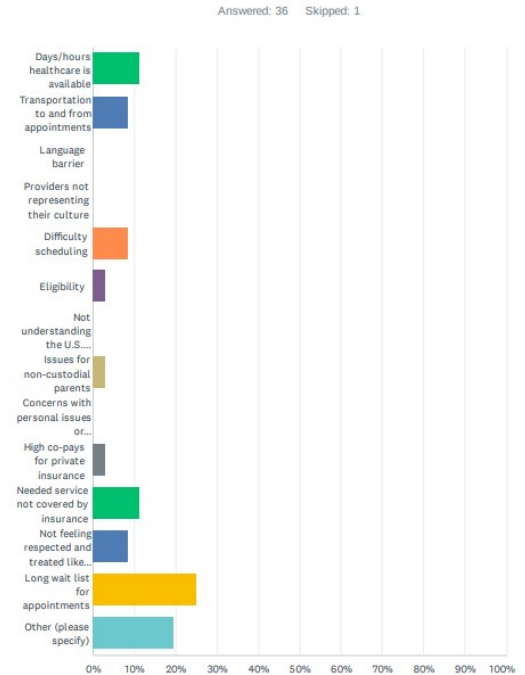
Parents

Q6 The biggest barrier I run into when accessing health care for my children (ages 0-5) is



Providers

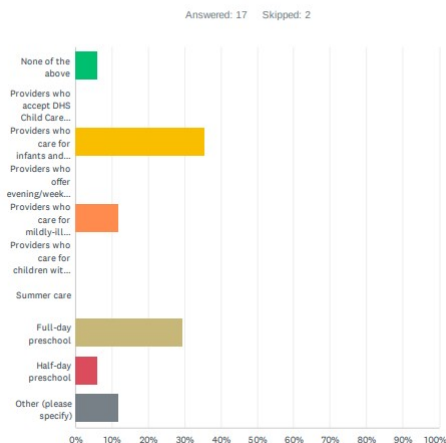
Q8 The biggest barrier I see families with children ages 0-5 have in accessing healthcare is



Both the parents and providers determined the type of child care/ early education programs we need more of in Johnson County are **providers who care for infants and toddlers**.

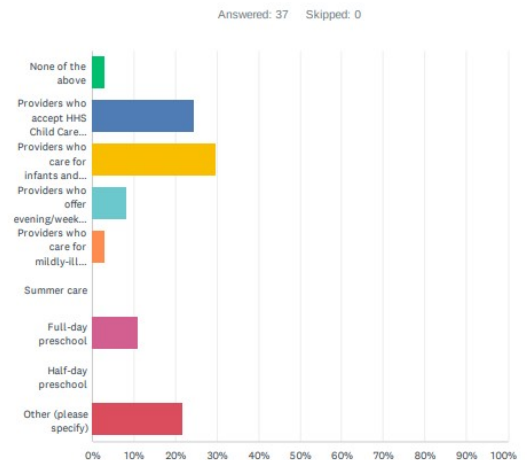
Parents

Q4 What type of child care/early education programs do we need MORE of in Johnson County



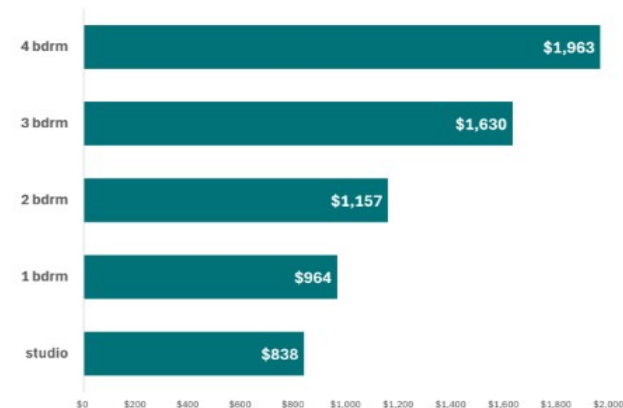
Providers

Q3 What type of child care/early education programs do we need MORE of in Johnson County

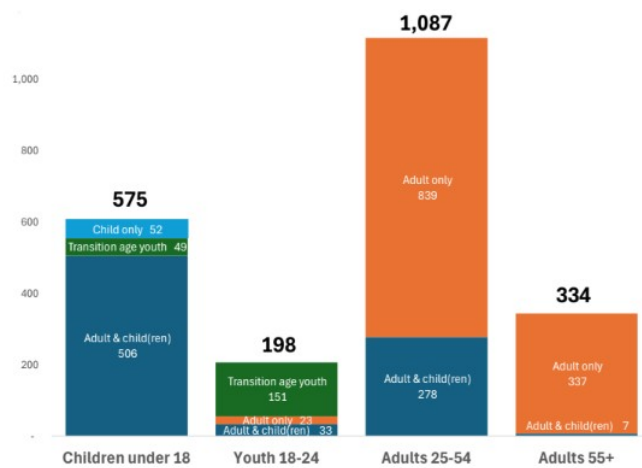


Housing insecurity remains one of Johnson County's biggest challenges. There are not enough affordable housing options, and rent costs are increasing. Johnson County provides a great number of resources regarding housing support. This ranges from short-term monetary help to emergency shelter. However, the number of people needing access to these services is also increasing.

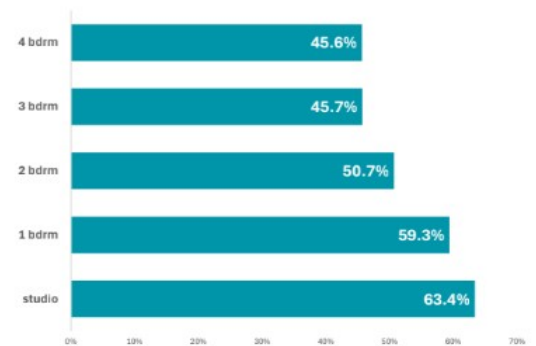
Johnson | Median rent by unit size, 2024



Johnson County
People accessing housing services or shelter by household type, 2023



Percentage change in median rent by unit size, 2010-24

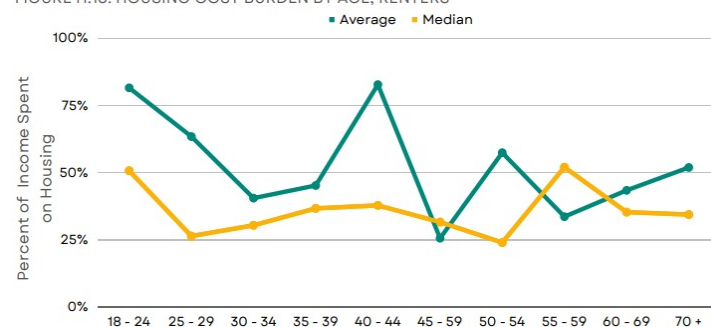


The **housing cost burden** is generally accepted as being 30% or more of income spent on housing. However, in Johnson County, the percentage of renters spending 50% or more of their income on housing is 35% and increasing.

TABLE H.3. HOUSING COST BURDEN FOR HOMEOWNERS

AND RENTERS	Homeowners (n=321)		Renters (n=157)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
30% + Income Spent on Housing	43	13.4%	91	58.0%
50% + Income Spent on Housing	17	5.3%	54	34.4%

FIGURE H.16. HOUSING COST BURDEN BY AGE, RENTERS



The **cost of living and poverty** numbers have been rising across the nation. This disproportionately impacts low-income families. The state median wage is \$21.14. Single-parent households and multiple-children households face challenges in meeting the self-sufficiency hourly earning wage in their category.

The Cost of Living in Iowa, 2023 Edition: Basic Family Budgets

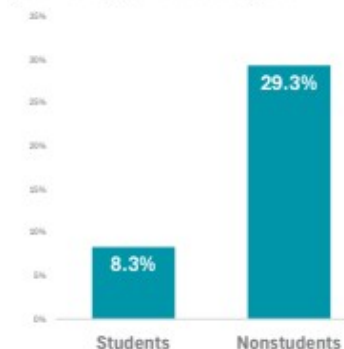
Johnson County										
	Single Individual	Single Parent		Married Couple, No Children		Two Working Parents			Two Parents, One Working	
		1 child	2 children	Young	Older	1 child	2 children	3 children	1 child	2 children
Monthly Expenses										
Rent and utilities	\$ 757	\$ 1,063	\$ 1,063	\$ 848	\$ 848	\$ 1,063	\$ 1,063	\$ 1,510	\$ 1,063	\$ 1,063
Food	321	470	784	589	565	729	938	1240	729	938
Health Care	253	627	475	528	868	932	1101	658	493	473
Child care	0	1095	1011	0	0	1095	1490	505	0	0
Clothing & household expenses	332	432	525	430	430	525	630	731	525	630
Transportation	628	606	693	1276	1276	1294	1294	1313	1102	1102
Monthly total	\$ 2,292	\$ 4,292	\$ 4,551	\$ 3,671	\$ 3,986	\$ 5,638	\$ 6,515	\$ 5,957	\$ 3,912	\$ 4,205
Annual total expenses	\$ 27,509	\$ 51,508	\$ 54,613	\$ 44,053	\$ 47,834	\$ 67,661	\$ 78,185	\$ 71,489	\$ 46,947	\$ 50,465
Annual before-tax earnings needed	\$ 32,658	\$ 58,977	\$ 64,174	\$ 50,912	\$ 53,151	\$ 77,898	\$ 87,939	\$ 81,098	\$ 55,274	\$ 57,814
Less: Income & payroll taxes	(5,600)	(9,017)	(8,235)	(7,639)	(7,844)	(12,172)	(12,562)	(8,763)	(7,018)	(6,097)
Plus: EITC & other credits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	581
Net resources	\$ 27,058	\$ 49,960	\$ 55,940	\$ 43,273	\$ 45,307	\$ 65,726	\$ 75,377	\$ 72,335	\$ 48,255	\$ 52,299
Family supporting hourly wage	\$ 15.70	\$ 28.35	\$ 30.85	\$ 12.24	\$ 12.78	\$ 18.73	\$ 21.14	\$ 19.49	\$ 26.57	\$ 27.80

County Comparisons

Monthly total expenses										
	Single Individual	Single Parent		Married Couple, No Children		Two Working Parents			Two Parents, One Working	
		1 child	2 children	Young	Older	1 child	2 children	3 children	1 child	2 children
Johnson County	\$2,292	\$4,292	\$4,551	\$3,671	\$3,986	\$5,638	\$6,515	\$5,957	\$3,912	\$4,205
Rank (1=highest cost)	2	1	5	2	12	1	1	1	2	3
Lowest cost county	\$1,969	\$3,230	\$3,853	\$3,291	\$3,461	\$4,585	\$5,049	\$5,340	\$3,674	\$4,002
Median county	\$2,110	\$3,453	\$4,225	\$3,497	\$3,690	\$4,859	\$5,576	\$5,555	\$3,873	\$4,218
Highest cost county	\$2,288	\$4,163	\$5,136	\$3,618	\$3,808	\$5,477	\$6,281	\$6,028	\$4,031	\$4,369

Have been unable to pay bills

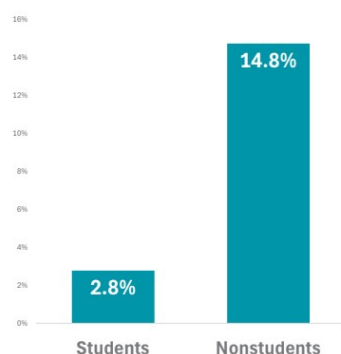
Percent saying YES to: During the last 24 months, was there a time when you were not able to pay your mortgage, rent or utility bills?



Food insecurity is another notable problem in Johnson County. About 20% of people are visiting more than one food pantry. Some families are also crossing the county lines to access more food. Food pantries have been experiencing record-breaking numbers every month.

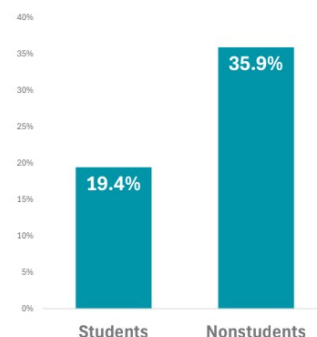
Have gone a whole day without food

Percent saying YES to: In the last 12 months, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

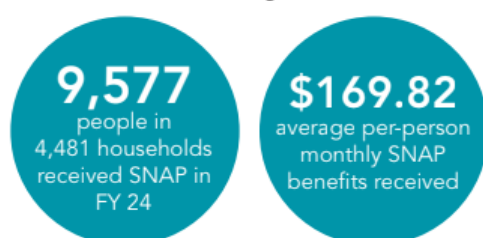


Have cut size of or skipped meals

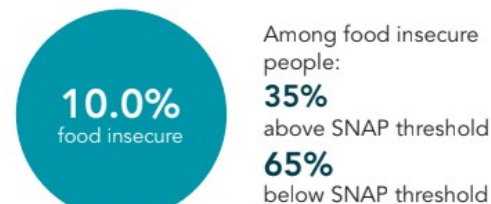
Percent saying YES to: In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?



Johnson County



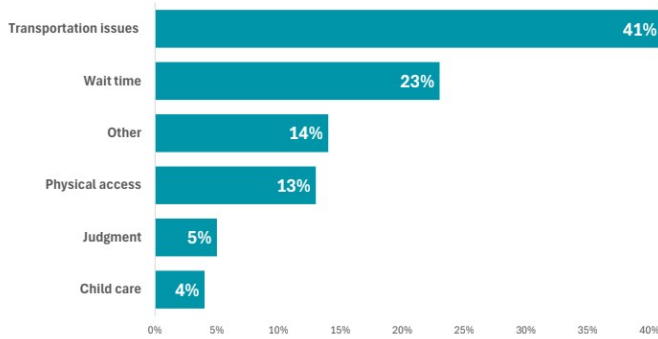
Johnson County



20% of people reported **barriers in accessing food pantries**, the main barrier being **transportation** issues. The 2022 community needs assessment shares there are 4,647 (7.58%) households with no vehicle. This can create barriers for other resources like healthcare and commuting to work. Johnson County provides several resources for transportation needs, from having a mobility coordinator to ride share. However, 25% of respondents described public transportation schedules not fitting their needs.

TRANSPORTATION

Types of difficulties reported by the 20% of people in Johnson County who reported difficulty accessing food pantries



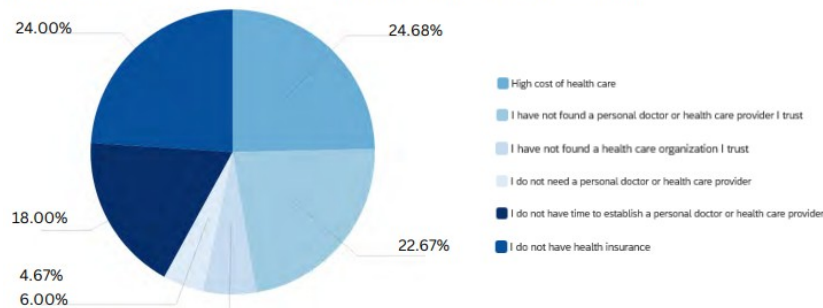
M.4 DIFFICULTY IN FOLLOWING AREA DUE TO INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

	Total*	Black or African American		White		Hispanic or Latino/a/x	
Difficulty getting to work or school	69	41.18%	14	15.89%	34	30.43%	14
Difficulty getting to medical appointments	50	-	-	13.08%	28	30.43%	14
Difficulty going shopping for groceries or other necessities	48	17.65%	6	14.02%	30	19.57%	9
Engaging in unsafe walking, running outside, or utilizing public transportation	39	-	-	14.95%	32	-	-
Public transportation schedules do not fit my schedule	77	-	-	30.84%	66	-	-
Difficulty affording public transportation (optional, specify)	16	-	-	5.61%	12	-	-
Total			34		214		46

*Total includes other race categories that are not shown due to too small sample size.

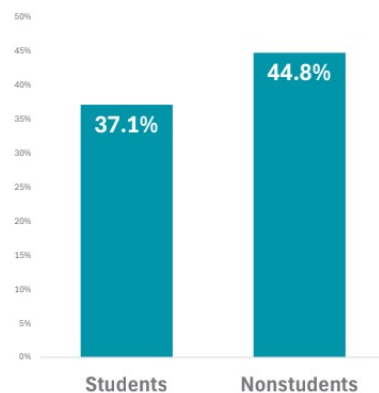
Across the Medicare and Medicaid population, there are mental health and social needs that impact the way they manage their chronic conditions and land them in the ER. **Many places will not accept patients who have Medicare Advantage or Medicaid** because they lose money. Another issue in this area is aligning with primary care in a meaningful way.

FIGURE HC.5. REASONS FOR NOT HAVING PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER(S)

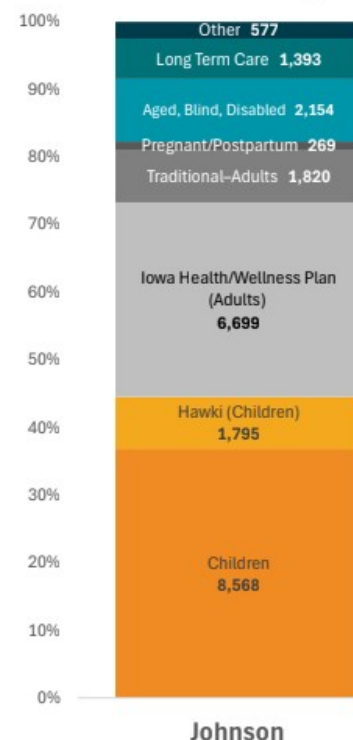


No primary care provider

Percent saying NO to: Do you have one person you think of as your personal doctor or health care provider (a primary care provider)?

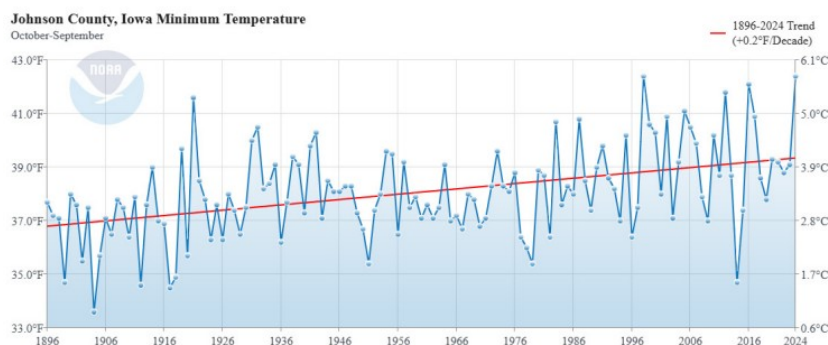
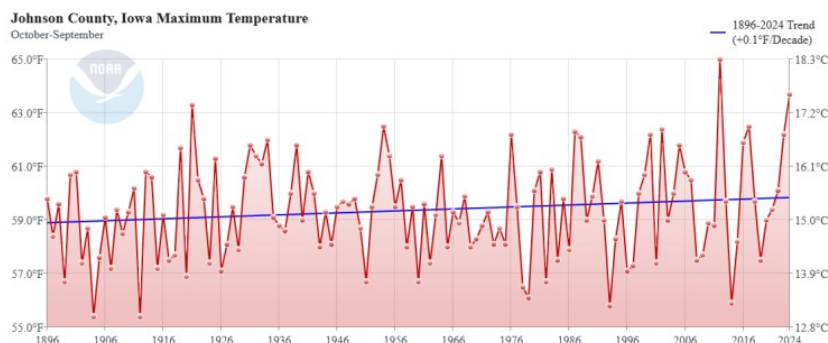
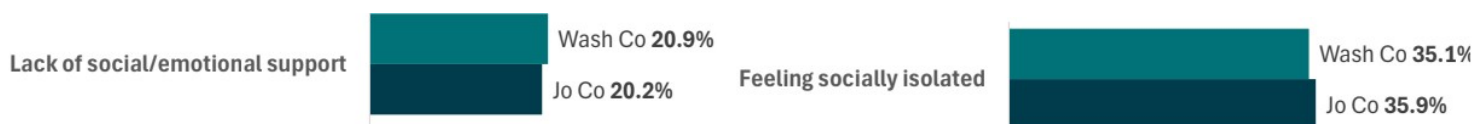


Medicaid coverage by type

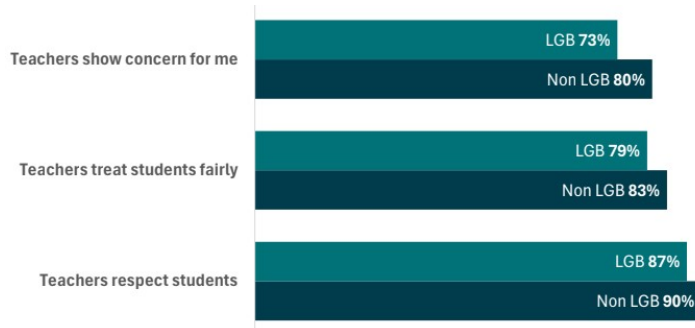


Many **mental health** indicators have worsened over a period of time. The county would benefit from focusing on **mental health awareness** and informing individuals about what we have in our communities and surrounding areas. **Crisis services** are a huge need in the community; this would stop incarceration and abuse of those with serious mental health issues. There is a need for more **wraparound services** to individuals for preventative health care. Another recurring theme is the lack of an adequate number of facilities and providers, particularly inpatient beds.

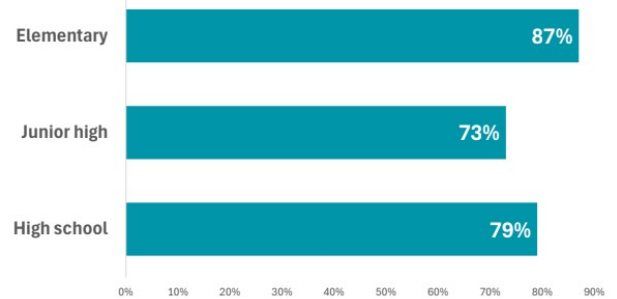
Focusing on **social needs** can make a difference in the county mental health conflicts. One need was to **provide access to spaces for people to recreate, at low or no cost**. This type of work can impact mental health and physical health in a positive way. Many Johnson County residents reported feeling socially isolated and felt a lack of social/emotional support. This would also address the **climate change crisis**, as summers get hotter and winters get colder, there are people who may not have access to cooling areas or shelter from the cold.



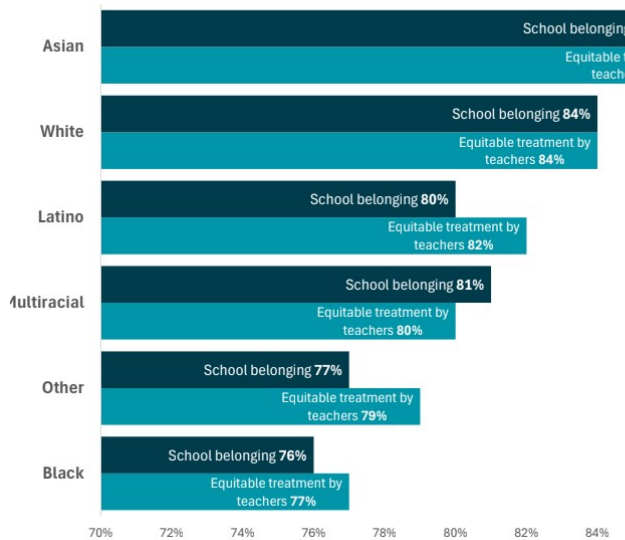
The following graphs provide a comprehensive overview of **students' experiences** within Johnson County. These visual representations highlight key aspects such as **satisfaction levels, challenges faces, and areas of improvement** as reported by the students themselves. The graphs can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current programs and identify opportunities for **enhancing the educational environment**. The data presented is crucial for understanding the diverse needs of our student population and for making informed decisions to support their academic and personal growth.



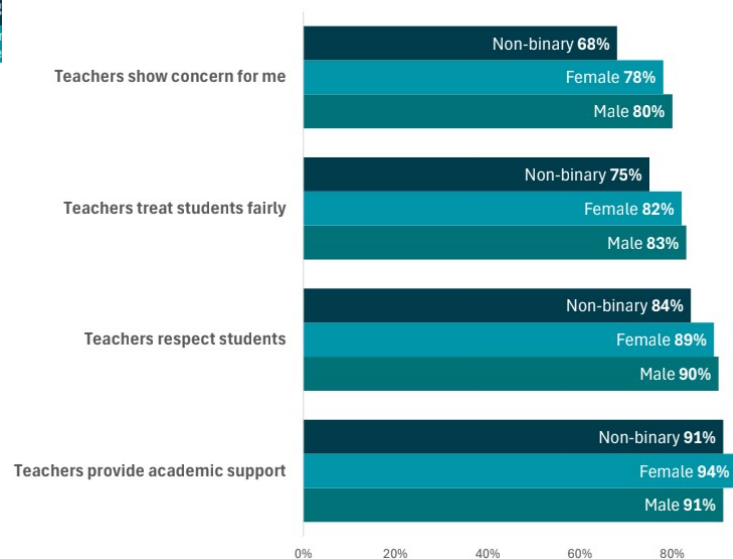
Percent of students reporting their school is safe



Percent of students in grades 5-12 reporting

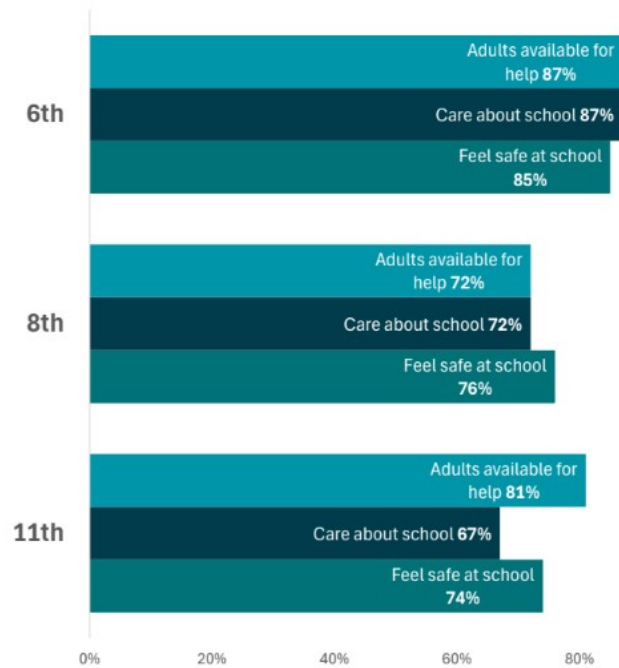


Percent of students in grades 5-12 reporting

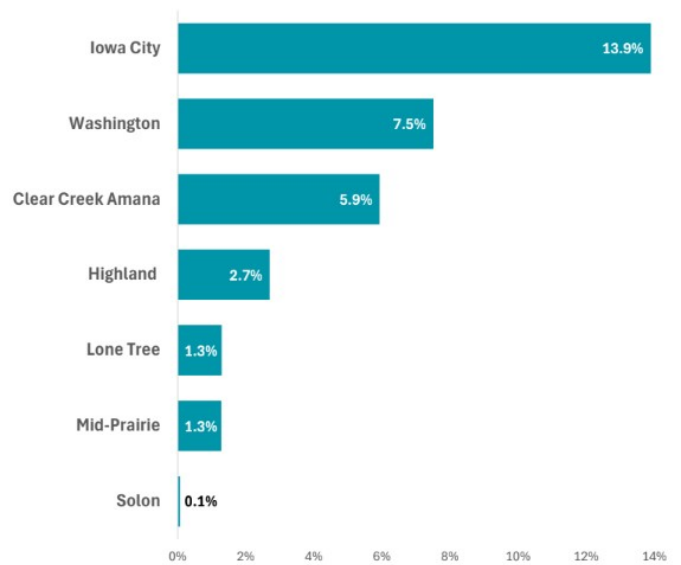


School engagement by grade

Iowa Youth Survey, schools in greater Johnson County



English Language Learners as percent of total students, by school district 2023-24



Source: Iowa Department of Education

Youth mental health by grade

Iowa Youth Survey, schools in greater Johnson County

YES to: In the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

6th grade	8th grade	11th grade
21%	19%	25%

YES to: In the past 12 months, have you thought about killing yourself?

6th grade	8th grade	11th grade
14%	16%	20%

YES to: In the past 12 months, have you made a plan about how you would kill yourself?

6th grade	8th grade	11th grade
5%	9%	7%

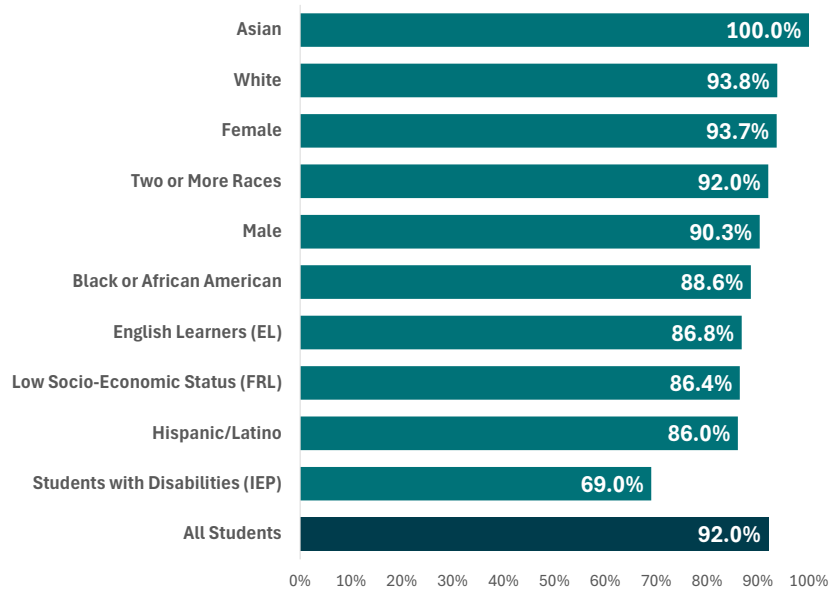
YES to: In the past 12 months, have you tried to kill yourself?

6th grade	8th grade	11th grade
3%	4%	3%

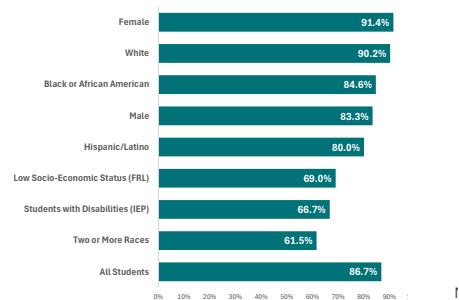
Source: Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey, 2021

On-time high school graduation

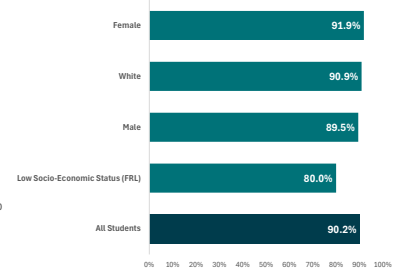
Iowa City | Graduation rate by group, 2023



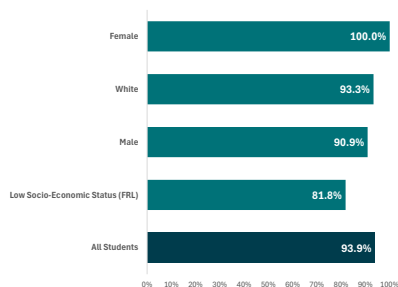
Clear Creek Amana | Graduation rate by group, 2023



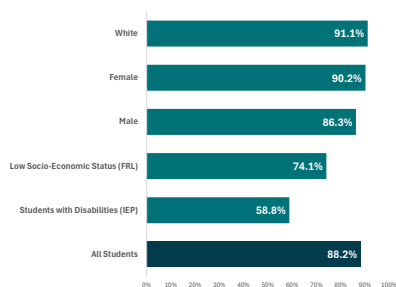
Highland | Graduation rate by group, 2023



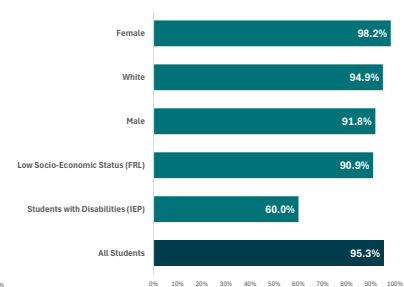
Lone Tree | Graduation rate by group, 2023



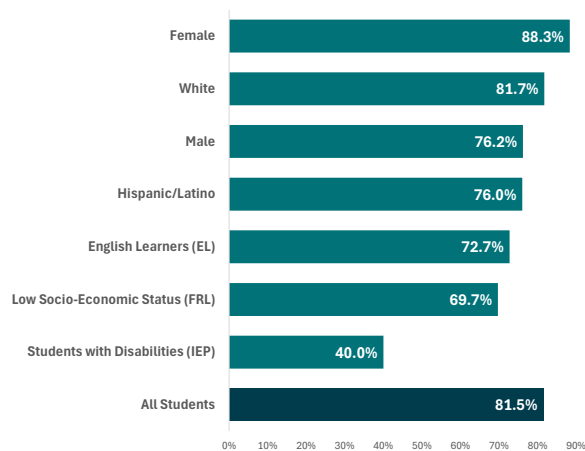
Mid-Prairie | Graduation rate by group, 2023



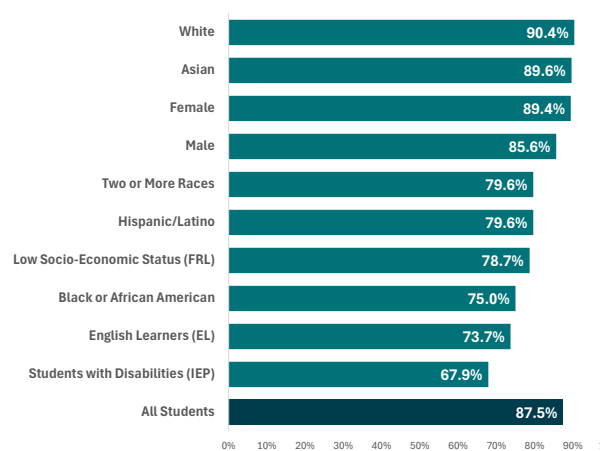
Solon | Graduation rate by group, 2023



Washington | Graduation rate by group, 2023



Iowa | Graduation rate by group, 2023



Additional Needs Assessment Data Analysis

Once overall needs have been identified, contracting partners assist in defining exactly how those needs look. Through the use of surveys, anecdotal information from families, and conversations with direct service staff, specific examples of need are identified. For example, “access to childcare” is a broad need that was further defined as “paying for childcare” and “providers not accepting State Child Care Assistance”. Once specific needs in each of the areas are defined, providers and families are asked to prioritize those needs for our community.

In addition to the needs assessments listed at the beginning of this section, the Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Board utilizes the feedback from families and providers to identify specific priorities for our community.

Result Areas & Priorities of Johnson County Empowerment/Early Childhood Iowa Area

Based on information gained from formal needs assessments and informal community input, the Johnson County Empowerment/Early Childhood Iowa Area Board identified the following Result Areas and Priorities. Each Priority has specific Strategies for implementation.

Results Areas	Priorities
Results Area A: Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments	Priority 1: Increase affordability and availability of quality early education
	Priority 2: Provide support services for providers through benefits and financial support for professional development
Results Area B: Safe, Stable, Nurturing Families and Homes	Priority 3: Addressing and implementing methods to increase availability of affordable housing
	Priority 4: Increase families’ healthy informal networks of support and utilization of appropriate community resources (food pantries, public transit)
Results Area C: Supportive and Connected Community	Priority 6: Increase mental health resources and awareness of them
	Priority 5: Increase number of providers willing to accept Medicaid and Medicare in the area

Community-wide Indicators

Community-wide Indicators are used by the JCE/ECIA to monitor the well-being of young children and families in our community and evaluate if progress is being made toward the intended Early Childhood Iowa results. The following indicators have been adopted to measure how well we are addressing each of our priorities county-wide.

State Result	Local Result Area	Local Indicator	Definition & Source
Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments	Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments	# of regulated child care programs	Number of child care centers licensed with DHS, child development homes registered with DHS, and child care homes listed with CCR&R. Sources: DHS, CCR&R
		# of regulated child care slots	Number of slots in regulated care (see definition above) Source: DHS
		# and % of early education environments meeting quality standards	Numerator: centers accredited by NAEYC, homes accredited by NAFCC, centers & homes at QRS Levels 3-5. Denominator: licensed centers, registered homes, listed homes. Sources: NAEYC, NAFCC, DHS
Secure and Nurturing Families	Safe, Stable, Nurturing Families and Homes	Rate of teen births	Numerator: births to teenage mothers. Denominator: total live births. Rate = $\times 1,000$ Age-specific birth rate is # live births in that age divided by estimated female population in that age group.
		# of confirmed child abuse reports	Number of confirmed and founded child abuse reports. Source: DHS
		% of domestic violence with children present	Numerator: number of domestic violence incidents in which children were recorded to be present. Denominator: total number of domestic violence incidents.
		# of families utilizing community	Numerator: Number of families accessing affordable housing programs.

		resources such as food pantries and public transit	Denominator: Total number of families in the county. Source: Local housing authority reports
		% of families utilizing community resources	Numerator: Number of families utilizing community resources such as food pantries and public transit. Denominator: Total number of families in the county. Source: Local community resource reports
Improving Community Connections	Supportive and Connected Community	% of uninsured children	Estimations.
		% of families utilizing public transportation	Numerator: Number of families utilizing public transportation. Denominator: Total number of families in the county. Source: Local public transportation reports

Strategies of the Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Board

Overall Strategies

The Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Board contracts with several local service agencies to provide needed services to children and families. No single agency can meet the needs of all families and each agency has its own strengths and unique culture. By contracting with more than one agency for the same type of service, the JCE/ECIA Board promotes culturally sensitive services and recognizes the diverse needs of families.

Increasing access to services has long been a priority for JCE/ECIA. Because transportation is such a large community need, funding available for early childhood services is not enough to adequately address the problem. In order to address access issues, JCE/ECIA encourages all applicants for funding to develop programs that include transportation for participating families, food if the event occurs in the evening or during a meal time, childcare for young children during the time the event is occurring, and other participant supports to eliminate some of the barriers to accessibility.

Following the concepts of diversity and collaboration, Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA works diligently to support and strengthen existing programs. One example is the development of a system of dual-enrollment (but single payer) within the FaDSS program and the Empowerment Family Support Program. Another example is the provision of wraparound funding for preschool. JCE/ECIA funds are combined with State Child Care Assistance, Head Start, Shared Visions, and the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program to expand the hours and days of care. Families applying for School Ready Scholarships are screened for eligibility for each of those programs before scholarships are awarded; families who are eligible are assisted in applying for the funds. Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA provides Coordinated Intake services regarding family support services to families with children ages 0-5 and coordinates the School Ready Scholarship program in relation to Head Start, Shared Visions Preschool, State Child Care Assistance, and Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs.

In order to address issues of cultural diversity, JCE/ECIA encourages and supports programs to employ staff that have similar cultural backgrounds as the families they serve and are native speakers of those languages.

Program-specific performance measures can be found in the JCE/ECIA Annual Report which is on the local website at www.jcempowerment.org.

Result Area & Priority-Specific Strategies

Secure and Nurturing Early Education Environments

Priority 1: Increase the accessibility and availability of quality early education.

Strategy 1: Address affordability of care, hours of care, and issues of transportation.

Strategy 2: Address the need for additional infant care, quality providers accepting state funded care, and full-day, full-year programs. Address barriers to providers accepting State Child Care Assistance.

Priority 2: Provide support services for providers through benefits and financial support for professional development.

Strategy 3: Support and make available high quality professional development opportunities and services which align with quality demonstration programs. A specific area of need is children's social/emotional development.

Strategy 4: Increase parent and community demand/expectations for high quality early care and education environments.

Strategy 5: Implement benefits programs for providers, including health insurance and retirement plans, to improve job satisfaction and retention.

The strategies and priorities for Secure and Nurturing Early Education Environments are designed to ensure that all children in Johnson County have access to high-quality early learning experiences. By increasing the affordability and availability of quality early education, we aim to provide every child with a strong foundation for future success. Support services for providers, including professional development and financial benefits, enhance the quality of care and education that children receive. These efforts are supported by partnerships with organizations such as 4Cs Community Coordinated Child Care and Grant Wood Area Education Agency, which offer training and resources to early education providers. By addressing transportation barriers and promoting quality standards, we create an environment where children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. These comprehensive strategies ensure that early education environments in Johnson County are secure, nurturing, and conducive to the healthy development of young children.

Safe, Stable, Nurturing Families and Homes

Priority 3: Addressing and implementing methods to increase availability and affordable housing.

Strategy 6: Collaborate with local housing authorities and organizations to increase the availability of affordable housing options.

Strategy 7: Provide financial assistance and support services to families facing housing insecurity.

Priority 4: Increase families' healthy informal networks of support and utilization of appropriate community resources.

Strategy 7: Facilitate community-building activities and support and utilization of appropriate community resources (food pantries, public transit).

Strategy 8: Increase awareness and accessibility of community resources such as food pantries, public, transit and health services.

The strategies and priorities for Safe, Stable, Nurturing Families and Homes aim to create a supportive environment where families can thrive. By addressing affordable housing, we ensure that families have access to secure and stable living conditions, reducing stress and promoting overall well-being. Increasing healthy informal networks of support and utilization of community resources such as food pantries and public transit helps families access essential services and build strong community ties. Collaborations with local housing authorities, organizations like Prevent Child Abuse-Johnson County, and Community Partnerships for Protecting Children enhance our ability to provide comprehensive support. These efforts collectively contribute to a nurturing environment where families can grow and succeed.

Family support programs are encouraged and supported to participate in the Iowa Family Support Credentialing process. Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County and United Action for Youth achieved re-credentialing in 2019.

Supportive and Connected Community

Priority 5: Increase number of providers willing to accept Medicaid and Medicare in the area.

Strategy 9: Offer incentives and support to healthcare providers to encourage acceptance of medicaid and medicare.

Strategy 10: Collaborate with healthcare organizations to streamline the process for providers to accept Medicaid and Medicare.

Priority 6: Increase mental health resources and awareness of them.

Strategy 11: Expand mental health services and resources available to the community.

Strategy 12: Increase awareness and education about mental health issues and available resources.

Strategy 13: Partner with mental health organizations to provide comprehensive support and services to individuals and families.

The strategies and priorities for a Supportive and Connected Community focus on enhancing access to healthcare and mental health resources, ensuring that all residents receive the care they need. By increasing the number of providers willing to accept Medicaid and Medicare, we make healthcare more accessible to vulnerable populations. Expanding mental health resources and raising awareness about them helps address critical mental health needs within the community. Partnerships with healthcare providers, mental health organizations, and local agencies like Grant Wood Area Education Agency and United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties facilitate the implementation of these strategies. Together, these efforts foster a connected community where residents feel supported and have access to the resources necessary for their well-being.

The Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA's Process for Awarding Funds

Each year, the Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Board determines the process for awarding funds. That process may vary depending upon whether current contracts can be renewed and whether individual contracts have been fulfilled. The board reviews the status of current contracts and decides the procedure that will be used to solicit and review funding applications. When contracts are eligible for renewal, the board utilizes an abridged process for applicants. When contracts are not eligible for renewal, the board follows a general RFP process.

Annually, the board reviews community needs assessments and updates priorities when necessary. Updated priorities are incorporated into any RFP as well as the scoring and review sheets for funding applications. When reviewing funding applications, board members receive copies of the identified priorities from the Community Plan as well as instructions for proposal review.

Applicants who are denied funding may appeal to the Johnson County Empowerment/ECIA Board. Appeals must be made in writing and be received by the Director within five (5) working days of receipt of the selection decision letter. Appeals must be based on a contention that the process violated state or federal law, that policies or rules did not provide adequate public notice, or involved a conflict of interest by staff or review team members. The Empowerment/ECIA Board, or a committee designated by the Board, reviews the appeal and mails a notice of its decision to the appellant within five (5) working days of the review.

SECTION III: FISCAL ASSESSMENT

Process to Gather Information

Annually, the JCE/ECIA Board requests financial information from all community partners via a google sheets form.

Availability of Funds

Programs for children 0 through 5 in the JCE/ECIA are provided through the availability of a number of funding sources.

Federal funds include Child Health funding, Early Access, Head Start, IDEA Special Education, Immunization funding, Maternal Health, Transitional Living Grant, and WIC funds.

State funds include ECI Funds, Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Block Grant, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Child Care Resource & Referral, Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS), DHS hawk-i funds, I-Smile, Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program (ICAPP), Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP), Medicaid, Shared Visions Preschool and Parent Support grants, Child Care Assistance (CCA), and Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

Local funds are provided through Johnson County and United Way of Johnson County as well as private donations to the agencies from the community.

Collaboration and Coordination of Funding

As much as possible, funds are used collaboratively to provide necessary services to children. Grantee agencies combine over 60% of Empowerment/ECIA funds with other funds for programs. Administrative costs are 3% of the budget, while 97% of funds are used for services.

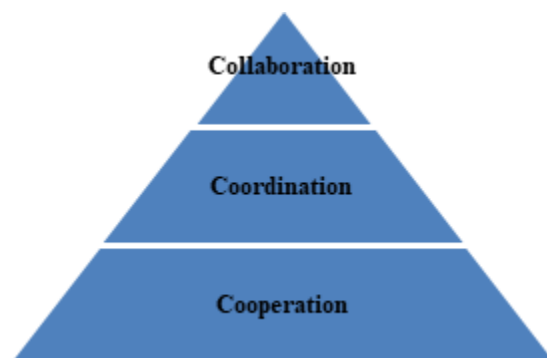
Early Childhood Iowa funds are:

- used in conjunction with other state and federal funds to wrap part-day, part-year Child Care Assistance, Head Start, and Shared Visions Preschool funding into full-day, full-year care.
- combined with Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funds to provide full-day programming for children participating in the part-time program.
- combined with local Johnson County dollars to provide staff time to assist with the coordination of planning and services in Johnson County.
- combined with Johnson County funds to provide no-cost emergency child care to families who are homeless or near-homeless.
- used as matching funds for the federal Transitional Living Grant. Funds provide Pediatric Nurse Practitioner home visiting for pregnant and newly parenting teens.
- combined with local Johnson County dollars to provide staff time to assist with the coordination of planning and services in Johnson County.

Additional public and private funding sources coming in to the Empowerment/ECI area:

Decat, Youth Development - utilized for services for youth ages 6 to 24, Juvenile Crime Prevention, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children - utilized to support Family Team Meetings.

SECTION IV: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



Collaborative and Networking Opportunities

JCE/ECIA engages in **collaboration** at multiple levels. JCE/ECIA is working with JCE/ECIA funded community partners (Community Partner Agency Group) towards the creation of a central point of contact for early childhood service planning. Central Point of Contact is an issue also being discussed at the Homeless Coordinating Board and Decat, and JCE/ECIA is working to ensure coordination of all of those efforts, including coordination with the 211 and Unite Iowa systems. Currently, JCE/ECIA strives to provide coordination of services for children from 0 through 5. The Johnson County Empowerment Family Support Program is the main source of parent education funding in the county. All referrals for that program go through the JCE/ECIA office to ensure appropriate referral and avoid duplication of services. All applications for JCE/ECIA School Ready Scholarships are reviewed for eligibility for other services/programs and families are assisted in accessing appropriate services (e.g., Head Start, Shared Visions Preschool, State Child Care Assistance, Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program).

Representatives from the JCE/ECIA board participate with various **planning groups** including the Alliance for Healthy Living, Community Partner Agency Group, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children Shared Decision-Making Team, Decat, Get Ready Iowa, Iowa City Community School District Early Childhood Task Force, Out Of School Time Work Group, and Prevent Child Abuse – Johnson County. JCE/ECIA actively participates in University of Iowa Trauma Informed Care and Trauma Informed Practice Committees. Past groups in which JCE/ECIA also participated include United Way’s Success By Six planning group, the Iowa City Housing Authority Program Coordinating Committee, the Johnson County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Early Access Council.

Through Johnson County Public Health and JCE/ECIA, a **Child Care Nurse Consultant** supports early care environments to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and child injuries, develops health protocols, and provides assistance with medication and the care for children with special health care needs.

Community Partners

The Johnson County Empowerment/Early Childhood Iowa Area has many engaged partners collaborating to improve and enhance the early childhood system.

Planning partners include Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Decat, DHS, Johnson County AEYC, Johnson County Social Services, Juvenile Crime Prevention, Alliance for Healthy Living, Prevent Child Abuse – Johnson County, United Way of Johnson County, and Youth Development.

Planning and service delivery partners include 4Cs Community Coordinated Child Care, Clear Creek Amana School District, DVIP, Grant Wood Area Education Agency, HACAP Head Start, Iowa Children’s Museum, Iowa City Community School District, Johnson County Public Health, Lone Tree School District, Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, Prelude Behavioral Services, Shelter House, United Action for Youth, the University of Iowa, and the Visiting Nurse Association.

Additional partners include city government, local libraries and recreation departments.

Perhaps the most valuable partners are the families served by JCE/ECIA. JCE/ECIA strives for continuous quality improvement by soliciting planning input and feedback from the families served through funded programs as well as from other families within the community.