

Child Welfare Research and Training Project

Child Support Training, Outreach, and Research

Purpose: Iowa State University staff, students, and faculty enrich Iowa's Child Support program through unparalleled training, outreach, and research.

Training

- Create new training, revise existing training, and produce technical documents related to child support processes and essential skills.
- Implement training through eLearning, in-person, and webinars using a specifically designed instructional design process, Smartsheet project management tool, and learning management system (Workday Learning).
- Update Child Support Attorney Guidebook.
- Provide training to 400+ caseworkers, management, and attorneys in 20 offices across the state who are responsible for establishing and enforcing child support.

Outreach

- Parenting: It's A Life (PIAL) equips youth and emerging adults with life skills and introduces them to the emotional, social, and financial realities of being a parent by providing a free, relevant, and research-driven curriculum to schools, colleges, and youth-serving agencies. Programs include the PIAL 7th-12th grade curriculum and ADMYRE, a dating violence awareness program (middle/high school and college editions).
- Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program (VPA) educates hospital personnel, pre-natal and community organizations, and unmarried parents to understand the importance of establishing paternity. Research is conducted to understand VPA processes in hospitals, VPA acceptance rates, and reasons for rejections to create best practices and targeted outreach.
- Child Support Training Partnership (CSTP) formalizes the process of collaboration among organizations that provide training to child support workers by expanding resources, strengthening training strategies, sharing knowledge, and promoting opportunities to network.
- Various digital and print media projects promote Iowa Child Support in a positive way.

Research

- Examine specific subject matter, design program evaluation, create surveys, analyze data and disseminate results via reports, posters, published journal articles, and conferences.
- Conduct research related to PIAL, VPA, child support caseload, child support process training, and child support legal projects for the Iowa Attorney General's office.

Who We Serve

Child Support Training, Outreach, and Research collaborates with **Iowa Child Support** within Iowa's Health and Human Services (HHS) in accomplishing its mission to assist families to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency by establishing and enforcing child and medical support orders and by processing support payments. Iowa Child Support also has projects and grants to increase and enhance the involvement of parents with their children and improve child support processes, help payors find work, facilitate access and visitation, and participate in other parental activities.

Impact of this collaborative work on Iowa families is significant. In state fiscal year 2024, Iowa Child Support caseworkers covered 136,174 child support and medical support cases. Total collections equaled \$307.8 million in current and past due child support; families were able to provide basic needs to their children with these dollars.

Funding for the contract is negotiated annually between Iowa State University (ISU) and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Iowa Child Support draws down federal dollars to pay for services provided by CW RTP. There are few University-State Child Support collaborations in the United States. This unique collaboration is nationally recognized. The contract has 17 full-time professional and scientific staff, 10+ undergraduate student workers/graduate research assistants, and 3 part-time administrative staff. The Principal Investigator (PI) is Carl Weems.



Health and
Human Services