

Lutheran Services of Iowa  
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Lutheran Services of Iowa ( LSI ) provides a broad range of services to the families of Story County, some of which are funded in part by the ASSET program. Although Boone County receives some services these services are not included in the ASSET funding process.

The LSI's Early Childhood Programs are coordinated and supervised by Alyssa Rasmussen . This position has recently become a fulltime position which allows more time for the director to be better engaged with funders and provide more outreach to determine where needs are greatest and to possibly expand services.

Referrals to the LSI programs have increased as schools and public safety agencies have become more aware the services exist. LSI is considering expanding some of their services to Nevada which is noted to have a significant need for LSI's early childhood services.

Although the Crisis Childcare Program has seen an increase in use from 2016 resources for child care have not. Notable is the lack of child care providers in Story County. This includes any family who only needs childcare as well as families who need other services including crisis childcare. Services which receive ASSET funding include:

Parents As Teachers. This program serves families with children 0- 5 years of age. It utilizes paid staff who are trained to provide in home visits to families identified as at risk, have a child with special needs or are dealing with issues related to poverty. The focus of these visits is to provide good parenting skills to promote health and planning for the family's future as well as preventing abuse and neglect. In the past families became aware of this program through word of mouth and referrals from social service agencies. Currently there has been an emphasis on outreach from the agency and coordinating with schools and public safety.

Crisis Child Care. This program serves families with children ages 0- 12 years of age. The service is provided outside of the child's home and is utilized for parents in crisis including sickness, mental health needs or other issues which prevent parents from providing a safe environment for a child or children. The program serves parents who have no other resources, support or options in the community. It works with the family to find long term solutions for future needs/ crisis's. Services are provided by licensed child care providers. These providers may also have other day care children in their homes and may be limited in the number of children they can serve. Although the increase in referrals is a good sign as more children and families are identified/served, finding licensed providers has proven to be a challenge.

Parent Development. The Nurturing Parent Program is an eight week course held in the spring and the fall. The course involves training in child development, parenting strategies, health and nutrition, positive discipline, special needs, early literacy, communication, sibling rivalry, stress, grief and other behaviors. This program is growing as more agencies are aware of its existence and success. The People Place also provides opportunities for informational gatherings 2 to 3 times a week which provides an atmosphere of fellowship and socialization. It is especially attractive to an ethnically diverse population due to its proximity to Iowa State University and families from overseas connected to ISU.

Supported Community Living. This program provides services to adults with disabilities and first received ASSET funding in 2006. The ASSET funding supports those clients who otherwise do not qualify for government paid waiver services. This program provides case management which seeks to assist those with disabilities in becoming self-sufficient. Services range from developing communication skills, learning homemaking skills, personal skills, check book balancing and acquiring/keeping employment. These supports can be provided in the community at a cost that is lower than would be paid through government sources for institutional placement outside the person's home/ community.

School Based Mental Health Services. Still in its initial phases. This liaison Rep. was unable to coordinate a meeting with the facilitators of this program but did receive some info via a phone conversation. This program has been assessing the need and providing services in the Nevada and Ames school district. The process for accessing this service begins with the family applying for CICS. Once the family has been denied funds through this agency they can then apply for other funds via United Way. This program has been focusing on elementary and preschool students this year working with children and families who face barriers to accessing mental health services otherwise. For example a family with insurance may not have the funds to pay a co-pay for services. Asset funds have been used to offset these costs which removes the barrier to mental health services. Services are generally provided in the school.

The strengths of the above LSI programs and LSI in general is there is a strong commitment to providing needed services in the community without the duplication of services. LSI believes in collaborating with other community agencies to accomplish this. The services provided in the family life programs are provided as a result of community resources, private donors, grants and ASSET funds. They function under a tight budget and have been wise in structuring the programs to utilize each dollar to its maximum benefit.

A challenge to LSI is regarding insurance and the Affordable Care Act, the complexity of the privatization of Medicaid and many unknowns about healthcare in general. This is not new and it does not appear to have been resolved over the past year.

LSI has a Local Advisory Council and a statewide board which provides structure and direction to all LSI programs. LSI's financial condition appears to be stable as it is a well-established organization which reaches statewide and nationally.