

Children's Grief & Loss Services in Rural Iowa

Since 2018, EveryStep's *Amanda the Panda* program has provided services in Iowa schools to support children experiencing grief and loss. In 2021, the Iowa Legislature began providing yearly funding to allow EveryStep to expand services beyond the Des Moines metropolitan area.

EveryStep asks for continued support of the school-based grief and loss program, and requests a renewed investment to sustain and grow the program to include additional rural school districts.

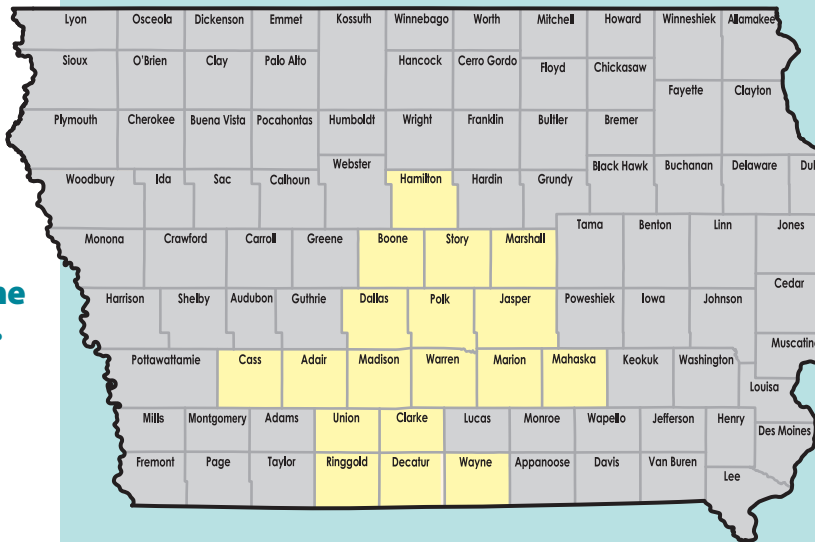
FUNDING REQUESTED: \$200,000



Counties Served To Date

Adair	Dallas	Madison	Polk	Warren
Boone	Decatur	Mahaska	Ringgold	Wayne
Cass	Hamilton	Marion	Story	
Clarke	Jasper	Marshall	Union	

Number of Schools Served to Date: 39



Addressing Children's Mental Health Through Grief Support Following Trauma & Loss

DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 14 school-aged children will lose a parent.

1 in 5 school-aged children will lose someone close to them.

Feelings of grief and loss can also stem from divorce, abandonment, incarceration, and other traumatic events.

EveryStep has a plan and vision to address the impact these losses have on children in Iowa.

Each child's grief is personal and unique. EveryStep staff are trained to assist with the complexity of what it means to experience grief and loss at a young age. It is important that we provide children with the tools to address their grief and improve classroom engagement. **Creating structures of support for grieving students is an investment in the long-term health of children, families and our communities.**

By giving kids healthy coping skills we can help them down a path that leads to healing, positive relationships with others, and success at school. Our group-based approach provides the necessary amount of support for most kids, while allowing our staff to identify kids who need a higher level of intervention.



We thank you for your continued support!

Since January 2022, rural students have participated in the school-based program. Throughout each 6-week session, students share their grief stories, connect with peers and learn resiliency skills to feel better equipped to cope with grief in healthy ways.

Expanded Assessment

At the end of each 6-week session, students fill out a survey to assess their coping skills and thoughts about the program. **EveryStep is now adding a pre-survey, and updating questions on the post-survey to discuss issues related to attendance and academic performance.** Staff will also track attendance on the days support groups are offered. This additional data will help our staff understand the effects of the program on student behavior.

Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Services



Why Our Work Matters

EveryStep's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health goals mirror federal, state and community objectives.

- Improve pregnancy outcomes by helping mothers engage in preventive health practices, including access to needed perinatal mental health resources..
- Improve child health and development by helping parents provide responsible and competent care.
- Improve economic well-being of the family by helping parents develop visions for their own futures, plan subsequent pregnancies, continue their education and find work.

The needs in Iowa continue to grow.

- According to the 2021 Iowa Maternal Mortality report, 100% of pregnancy-related maternal deaths were preventable.
- According to the Iowa Department of Health & Human Services and the Center for Disease Control, injury continues to be a leading cause of death in childhood.
- Increases in mental and behavioral health needs among children and adolescents continue to impact young Iowans and their ability to thrive.

EveryStep serves families where they are.

- Thousands of home visits are made each year to pregnant moms and families with young children by case managers, nurses, interpreters and doulas.
- Hundreds of families are served by phone for children's mental, behavioral and developmental health needs, as well as pregnancy support for new moms .
- Thousands of families are provided with referrals to resources through our statewide coordinated intake.
- Hundreds of children are screened for dental health needs and educated about the importance of dental hygiene and nutrition.

Iowa families rely on maternal and child health community-based services to help their families grow and thrive.

EveryStep needs increased, sustainable funding for programs supported by Medicaid reimbursement, Early Childhood Iowa Grants, Family Home Visiting funding, and Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health grant funding.

With adequate funding, nonprofits such as EveryStep can continue to serve families and provide them with a strong foundation for the future.

Funding Gaps

EveryStep's services touch people at every phase of life. We are recognized experts at providing critical services to Iowans and have been trusted to do this work in central Iowa for more than a century. EveryStep Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health programs provide critical pre-natal, postpartum and child development services that save the state's Medicaid programs money by preventing costly complications and overcoming barriers outside of hospitals and physician clinics.

The combination of continued flat Medicaid reimbursement and grant funding coupled with the increased cost of providing these services makes it harder for EveryStep to provide care at the scale needed.

Nonprofits such as EveryStep *cannot* rely on philanthropic funding to fill these funding gaps. EveryStep deserves to be paid fairly for the services we provide to keep our community thriving physically, socially and economically.



everystep.org

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For more information about EveryStep's legislative priorities, please contact:

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