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Project Summary

Iowa is divided into 9 Area Education Agencies (AEA) that provide support to school districts in the area of special education by conducting evaluations and providing consultation for students who have or are suspected to have a disability that affects their educational progress. This includes conducting functional behavior assessments (FBA) for students to help to create behavior intervention plans. In 2009, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) made a commitment to improving the quality of FBAs by encouraging each AEA to have Challenging Behavior Teams and providing training to members of the team to improve their skills in behavior assessment. The DE contracted with experts in behavior analysis at Iowa's UCEDD, the Center for Disabilities & Development (CDD) at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital, to provide hands-on training in experimental analysis to these teams. The goal of the DE was to have these teams be able to conduct experimental analyses as part of FBAs for students who engage in challenging behaviors (e.g., aggression, destruction, self-injurious behaviors). Across the 7 years of training, we have had 29 AEA trainees reach the Advanced Level criteria on all three outcome measures. Twenty-two of these trainees continue to work in the state. In 2013, the DE encouraged larger school districts to form behavior teams while supporting their training in experimental analyses. These Local Education Agency (LEAs) teams continue to be involved in the training.

Participants

Table 1: Summary of Participants

	2009-10 Cohort 1	2010-11 Cohort 2	2011-12 Cohort 3	2012-13 Cohort 4	2013-14 Cohort 5	2014-15	2015-16
Number of AEA Teams	8	9	9	8	8	9	9
Number of AEA Trainees	33	42	50	30	32	29	27
Additions to Training teams/ Loss to Attrition		+ 10 -1	+18 -10	+1 -21	+6 -4	-5	+1 -3
Number of LEA Teams					3	6	9
Number of LEA Trainees					10	28	44
Additions to Training teams/ Loss to Attrition						+3 -3	+5 -3

Table 2: Discipline of Participants

Discipline of Challenging Behavior Team Members 2015-16	AEA	LEA
Administration	0	7
Behavior Analysis	0	3
Education/Psychology (Bachelor degree)	0	5
School/Clinical Psychology (EdS, Ph.D.)	9	2
School Counseling/Counseling (Masters)	1	3
Social Work (Masters)	12	8
Special Education (Masters)	5	14*
Speech/Language Pathology	0	1**
Other (Masters)	0	1

* One individual has BCBA
** Individual is eligible to sit for the BCBA exam

Training Model

•Didactic Training

•Trainees participated in 2-3 hour lectures on key principles of behavior analysis and behavior intervention approximately 2 times per month via zoom meetings.

Training Visits

•Teams conducted behavior assessment with modeling and coaching from the CDD Training Teams. AEA teams had training visits in the clinic and school setting and LEA teams had visits in the school setting. All referrals and assessments were conducted with students referred to behavior teams because of their engagement in challenging behaviors (e.g., aggression, self-injurious behaviors, destruction). Teams were offered 9 to 13 visits each year.

Skills Trained

Behavior Assessment Tools	Behavior Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Collection Graphing Data Analysis (single-case design) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive Analysis Preference Assessments (e.g., Fisher et al., 1992) Choice Analyses/Concurrent Operants Assessments (e.g., Harding et al., 1999) Functional Analysis (e.g., Iwata et al., 1982/1994, Northup et al., 1991) Antecedent Analysis (e.g., Carr and Durand 1985)

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Evaluation Measures

Three evaluation measures were created to determine the skill level of team members. The NIH Competencies Proficiency Scale was used to describe each level of skills. When team members passed measures they were determined to be at the Advanced Level.

Exam: Trainees were administered an exam to test the trainee's knowledge in the areas of behavior principles and behavior assessment.

Self-Report of Experience: Trainees rated their level of experience with different behavior assessment skills: Descriptive assessments, experimental analysis, antecedent-based strategies, and function-based strategies. Trainees completed this assessment until their ratings met Advanced Level criteria.

Task Analyses: Task analyses were created for each of the skills being trained. The trainee's level of independence in performing skills was evaluated at each training visit. Trainees met the Advanced level when they independently performed the skills on two occasions.

Progress of Trainees

Figure 1. Percentage of AEA Trainees Meeting Advanced Level Each Year

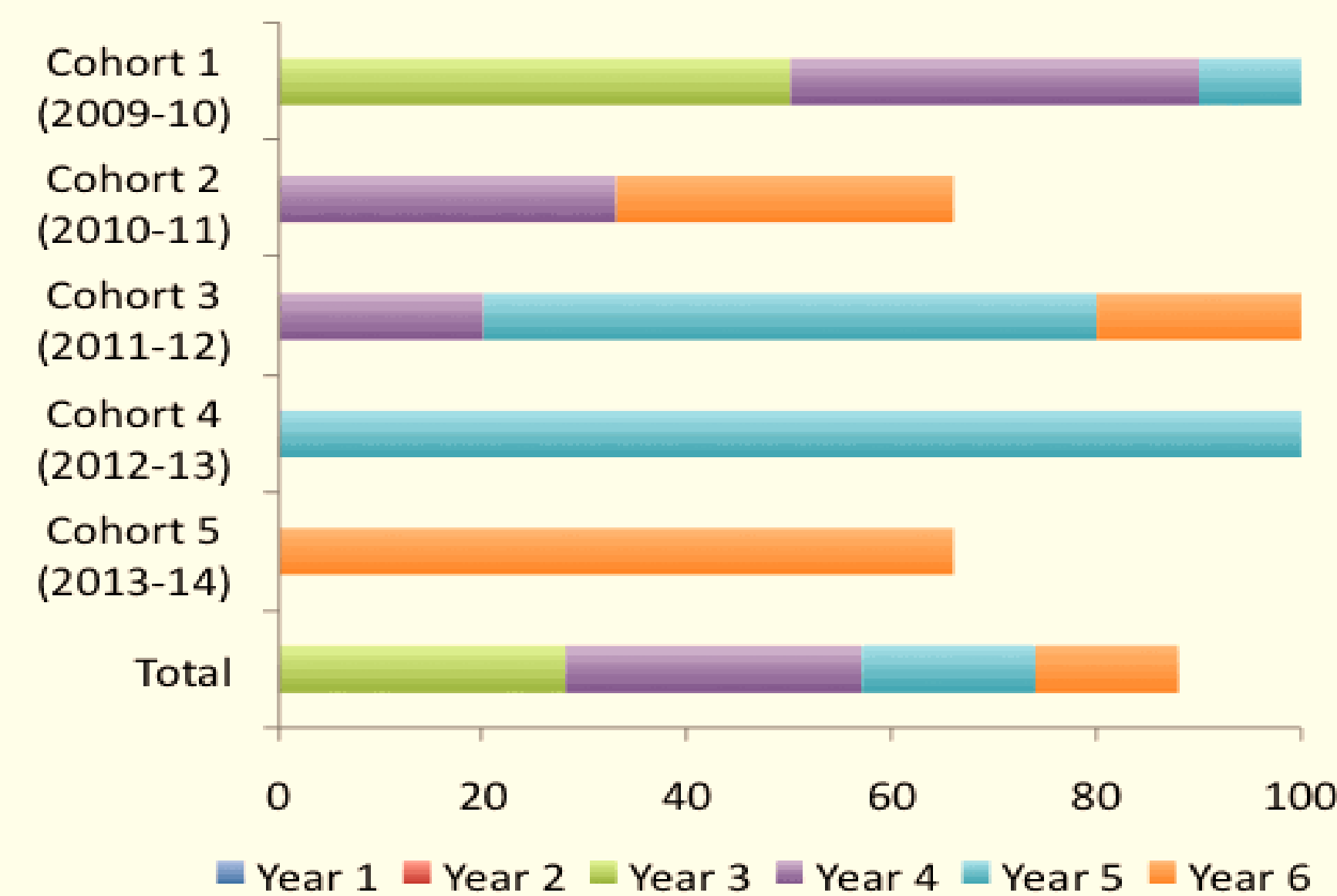
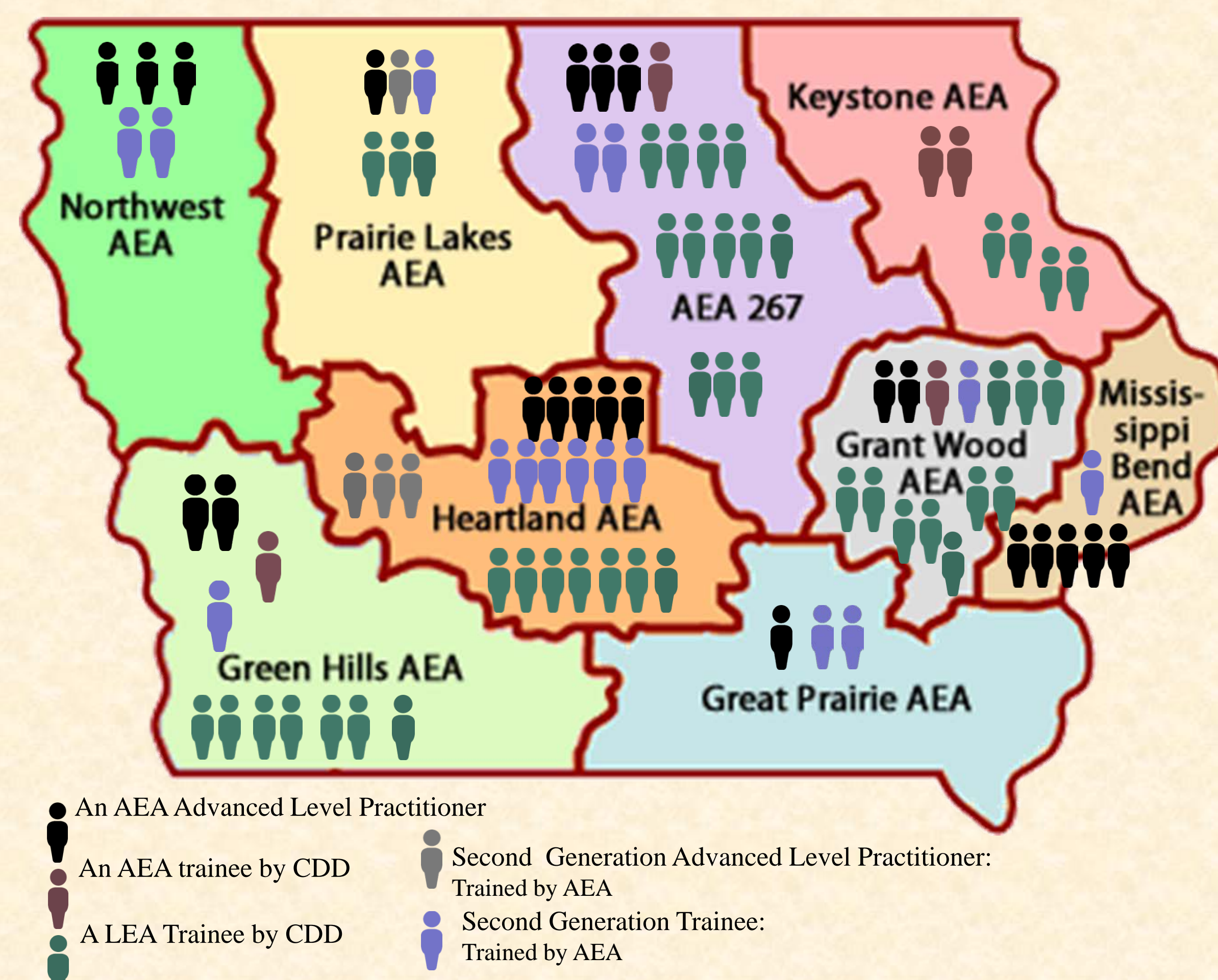


Figure 2. Current Number of Graduates and Trainees across Iowa



Results & Discussion

The CDD & DE have been training behavior teams across the state of Iowa for more than 6 years to improve the quality of functional behavior assessments in the state. Trainees are learning how to conduct experimental analyses and are using them in their practice.

- 29 AEA trainees who have met criteria to be identified at the Advanced Level
 - 22 of these trainees are training other team members
 - 6 left their positions and the state
 - 1 moved into an administrative position
- 44 LEA trainees are currently being trained

Analysis of AEA team's rate of progress identified

- Higher FTE on behavior team resulted in higher likelihood to complete training and in faster rate of progress
- Location of training (clinic vs. school) did not affect training rate
- Skill of functional analysis took most training sessions to learn.
- No difference in rate of progress based on discipline (school psychologist, school social workers and special education consultants showed no differences in rate of progress)

Trainees are becoming leaders in their AEAs, LEAs, and in the state. They are designing training for other AEA and LEA personnel to improve practice. They are also part of the decision-making team for designing new paperwork related to FBAs and BIPs which will further impact the practice in the state. By creating experts, we created new leaders in the state.