

*A periodic update on early childhood mental health initiatives in Pennsylvania
Number 5, March 2011*



Tuesday, May 3, 2011 is National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA. This year's event will focus on **building resilience in young children dealing with trauma**.

As part of local observances of Awareness Day, SAMHSA encourages families, youth and professionals to:

1. Integrate mental health and model resilience skills in every environment that has an impact on child development from birth;
2. Enhance resilience and nurture social and emotional skills in young children from birth;
3. Provide information to the public and teach them to recognize the signs of traumatic stress.
4. Raise awareness that treatment for trauma is critical to achieving the milestones of a child's social and emotional development from birth; and
5. Promote trauma-informed services and supports in all child-serving settings.

More information, including how local communities can observe Awareness Day, is available at www.samhsa.gov/children.



PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY EXPANDS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Last fall, two therapists each from four Pennsylvania licensed mental health providers received intensive training in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy(PCIT). Each of the four providers is located in one of the Office and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' regions. The providers are The Guidance Center, Bradford; Community Services Group, Lancaster; Friendship House, Scranton; and Child Guidance Resource Centers, Media.

The training is made possible by a two-year grant from The Heinz Endowments to the Department of Public Welfare. Two licensed therapists from each of the four agencies were trained in November by Dr. Cheryl McNeil, a professor of psychology at the University of West Virginia and a nationally recognized trainer in PCIT. Ongoing clinical supervision and a two-day advanced training in April 2011 is being provided by Dr. Amy Herschell from the University of Pittsburgh. The Department of Public Welfare is selecting four additional agencies to receive training for two licensed therapists each in May 2011. When the two-year grant is completed, the 16 therapists trained will also be able to train one additional therapist each in their agency, for a total of 32 new Pennsylvania therapists trained in PCIT.

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy is an evidence-based mental health intervention that has been shown to decrease child behavior problems, improve the parent-child relationship, decrease parental stress while increasing their sense of control, and decrease the reoccurrence of or prevent child abuse. Implementing this intervention will help increase the capacity of Pennsylvania providers to serve very young children. PCIT has been demonstrated to have positive outcomes with many children and families and is listed in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. The implementation of PCIT in Pennsylvania supports the recommendations of the state Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Committee and the efforts of the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, in addressing the shortage of providers who are able to meet the needs of children ages birth to five. The eight providers chosen to receive training through the Heinz Endowment grant will join a number of other Pennsylvania providers who are also implementing PCIT. More information at www.pcit.org.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN PENNSYLVANIA

SNAPSHOT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION IN 2009-2010

Project Goals:

- Reduce the number of children expelled from child care due to behavior issues
- Increase the understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success
- Link and bridge systems and services on behalf of a child, family and program

Selected Statistics:

- 12 full-time ECMH consultants provided services
- 453 children received ECMH consultation services
- An average of 207 early childhood educators received on-site ECMH consultation each month
- An average of 1315 children were impacted each month by consultation services delivered in their early care and education programs
- Services were provided in 51 counties (76 percent of all Pennsylvania counties) and in 273 early learning facilities
- 38 percent of requests for services were for aggression; other reasons: self-regulation (37 percent), interaction (11 percent), communication (13 percent), attachment (1 percent)
- 298 children were referred to community agencies for more intensive services
- 95 percent of directors and teachers reported increased understanding of a child's behavior
- 313 hours of professional development were offered, and ECMH consultants offered 429 hours of resource and referral

Download a handy two-page summary of the annual report at www.parecovery.org (Statewide Initiatives/Early Childhood Mental Health).

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Pennsylvania's efforts to integrate the Strengthening Families approach into its early childhood and child welfare programs has been led by a statewide Leadership Team that includes representatives from the Departments of Public Welfare and Education, as well as community-based service partners, early care and education programs, local school districts and Intermediate Units. The Team offers guidance to state child- and family-serving programs in incorporating the Strengthening Families approach within their work. Through facilitated discussion, led by staff from the Child Welfare Training Program, the Leadership Team members developed a mission and vision for their work. The mission statement of the group is: "Pennsylvania, through the Strengthening Families Leadership Team, works to sustain and weave the Five Protective Factors, which are social and emotional competence of children, knowledge of parenting and child development, social connections, concrete supports in times of need and parental resilience, into policies, program and practice across child and family service systems." And the resulting vision statement is that "Pennsylvania families will use a seamless network of committed partners who provide strength-based family supports."

Plans for the 2011 calendar year include bringing the Community Café process to PA as a method to increase parent voice in programs and services and moving the Strengthening Families framework into public pre-school and kindergarten venues.

The leadership team is continuing its work to weave Strengthening Families into existing policies, programs, and practice

across all child and family service systems. For more information, contact Carrie Collins, Family Support Program Manager at ccollins@state.pa.us.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS



Positive Behavior Support is based on the Pyramid Model developed by the Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel)

Although the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network was originally formed to support school-wide implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), the principles and structure are appropriate to also support program-wide implementation of PBIS in early childhood settings. Therefore, staff from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Early Intervention

Technical Assistance, and the Pennsylvania Key have been added to the state leadership team. The leadership team is working to adapt the process that currently recruits, trains and supports school-wide network facilitators to develop early childhood facilitators, and the next training cohort will include both groups. Once trained, facilitators may offer their services to other early childhood settings who are looking for coaching support.

Currently there are nearly 100 early childhood settings that are implementing program-wide PBIS with state-level support to train coaches and manage data. Nearly 60 of these are involved in an Early Intervention/Early Childhood partnership project. Another 42 are implementing PBIS more independently but still accessing the state level training. These programs will be invited to join the network as soon as the process is finalized. Joining the network will provide ongoing access to state-level training and data resources as well as the opportunity to be publicly recognized for high quality implementation of

program-wide PBIS.

The guidance and support provided to early childhood programs is based on resources and consultation from the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel) and the Technical Assistance Center for Social and Emotional Intervention (www.challengingbehavior.org). For more information, contact Susan Zeiders at szeiders@pattan.net. Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network website: www.papbs.org.

ECMH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Committee continues its work to implement the recommendations submitted to the secretary of Public Welfare in September 2009. In June 2010, the committee provided an update on progress to the secretary. In September, co-chairs Leigh Carlson-Hernandez and Connell O'Brien were re-elected and the committee agreed to two new focus areas: family engagement and systems opportunities (the latter to develop capacity to respond to grant proposals and other opportunities to advance the work. In December, Dr. James Guevara, pediatrician and clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania, presented the results of a study on the use of developmental screening instruments in pediatric offices. Among the findings was that more development delays are identified and follow-up interventions provided when a formal screening instrument is administered by office staff than when the physician relies on informal conversations with parents about developmental milestones. The study supports the advisory committee's recommendation to promote more extensive use of validated screening instruments across the commonwealth.

Committee workgroups are monitoring progress on the recommendations to ensure that indicators of success are identified. Additional family members have joined the committee and more are being recruited. The committee has been meeting quarterly in Harrisburg and is explor-

ing other options for doing its work. The next meeting is June 7, 2011.

CONCEPT PAPER ON FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Members of the staff of the Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health Services have been working for several months to develop a concept paper entitled "A Call to Action: Awareness, Identification and Intervention with Children Diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Pennsylvania." The paper hopes to create discussion among stakeholders across the commonwealth to support Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, FASD, awareness, identification and intervention. The paper will also provide information about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and FASD through a review of the current literature on this subject, and influence and support various statewide systems in the appropriate management and treatment of children with an FASD. Recognizing that early intervention is important to help children develop to their fullest potential despite this irreversible condition, children's bureau staff presented on the topic at the Infant Mental Health Conference last October.

KEYSTONE BABIES

Keystone Babies is a voluntary program offered to families of infants and toddlers in Keystone STAR 3 or STAR 4 child care centers. The program uses evidence-based approaches to fill gaps in early childhood services, offer high quality learning opportunities, promote child development in all areas (including social-emotional), and offer supportive resources to families. Centers were chosen for the program based on the availability of qualified providers, high poverty and other risk factors. Parents are involved with staff in planning their child's curriculum, nutrition, etc., and health and mental health specialists work with the program to support the children's development.

MORE REASONS TO INVEST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The last edition of the ECMH Update (April 2010) provided several compelling reasons for quality early childhood programs. Here are some more:

America's Edge, an organization that works to strengthen businesses and the economy through proven investments in children, recently issued a report on *Strengthening Pennsylvania Businesses Through Investment in Early Care and Education: How Investments in Early Learning Increase Sales from Local Businesses, Create Jobs and Grow the Economy*, February 2011. The report asserts that "early care and education should be a critical component of Pennsylvania's economic recovery" because "for every \$1 invested..., an additional \$1.06 is generated for a total of \$2.06 in new spending." The full report is available at <http://bit.ly/i949PA>.

In his keynote address at the Infant Mental Health Conference in October, Dr. Pat Levitt illustrated how "the basic principles of neuroscience indicate that later remediation will be more costly than preventive intervention." Early experiences influence brain development, and trauma and chronic stress in the life of a young child are "toxic" to the developing brain. Interventions can help to reverse the effects of trauma on brain development if they happen early enough. For more information, read "The Impact of Early Adversity on Children's Development," from the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: <http://bit.ly/dXdgas>. Also see "Connecting Neurons, Concepts, and People: Brain Development and Its Implications," National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University: <http://bit.ly/1jgLMo>.

SECOND ANNUAL INFANT MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE SELLS OUT

The Second Annual Infant Mental Health Conference, sponsored by Chatham University, was held October 22-23, 2010 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The conference attracted a sold-out audience of more than 265, including early intervention workers, preschool teachers, mental health professionals and others.

The conference featured four keynote speakers:

- Mary Dozier, Ph.D., University of Delaware, "Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up: An Intervention for High-Risk Infants and Their Parents."
- Jerilynn Radcliffe, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, "The MOM Program: Home Visiting to Empower Mothers with Young Children."
- Pat Levitt, Ph.D., University of Southern California, "The Neuroscience of Toxic Stress and Its Impact on Mental and Physical Health for a Lifetime."
- Joy Osofsky, Ph.D., Louisiana State University, "Trauma Through the Eyes of a Child."

Plans are under way for the 2011 conference which will be held in Harrisburg. Watch for information at www.chatham.edu/imh

This is the fifth edition of a periodic early childhood mental health update. Previous editions are available online at www.parecovery.org (Statewide Initiatives/Early Childhood Mental Health). Ideas and contributions for future updates are invited. Please send information to:

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RESOURCES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

The Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation was created through a grant from the Office of Head Start and provides materials for mental health consultants, Head Start administrators and staff, training and technical assistance providers and families. Included among the resources is a series of Best Practice Tutorials. Topics currently available are: Strengthening Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs; Defining Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and the Consultant Role; The Effective Mental Health Consultant; Mastering the Consultative Stance; Introduction to the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Needs Assessment; Recognizing and Addressing Trauma in Infants, Young Children, and their Families. Website: www.ecmhc.org; Tutorials: www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/index.html

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (one arm of the Center) applies the science of early childhood and early brain development to public policy decision-making that promotes successful learning and physical and mental health for all young children. Working papers in "The Science of Early Childhood" explore the effect of early experiences on brain development. The two most recent papers are "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Development" and "Early Experiences Can Alter Gene Expression and Affect Long-Term Development. Website: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/topics/science_of_early_childhood/

National Center for Children in Poverty

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is a public policy center that promotes the economic security, health and well-being of America's low-income families and children. NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of ensuring positive outcomes for the next generation. Recent publications related to early childhood mental health and development include:

- Promoting Young Children's Health and Development: Taking Stock of State Policies
- Promoting the Social-emotional Wellbeing of Infants and Toddlers in Early Intervention Programs: Promising Strategies in Four Communities
- Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Young Children in the Child Welfare System: What Every Policymaker Should Know

Website: www.nccp.org (click on Publications and search by topic—Early Care and Learning, and Children's Mental Health)

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project Factsheets

Fifteen early childhood mental health consultants in the six regions of the Pennsylvania Key provide child-specific consultation services to Keystone STARS child care centers. In addition to consultation, observation, assessment and referral services, the consultants offer resources to providers and families to support the social and emotional development of young children. One regular resource is a monthly one-page factsheet, "FOCUS on Early Childhood Mental Health" that addresses a variety of issues related to promoting healthy social and emotional development and addressing emotional and behavioral problems in the classroom and at home. These factsheets are all available online at www.parecovery.org/services_child.shtml#focus and can be freely printed for distribution or reproduced in agency newsletters with appropriate credit.