

## **Social-Emotional Health Design Team**

### **Work group: Community Supports**

Parents and families are the first and most critical resource to build and maintain children's social-emotional health. Research tells us that the stresses of living with low income and without needed formal and informal supports make it more difficult for parents to nurture their children with the positive parent-child interactions that build children's social-emotional health.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Adults have fewer than three adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Families have access to paid leave
- Families are screened for poverty at well-child visits
- Parents have access to home visiting, parent education, and family preservation programs
- Parents participate in home visiting, parent education, and family preservation programs

North Carolina has a lot of assets in place! There has been a lot of excellent work already done in North Carolina around these issues. Pathways would like to lift up and leverage these assets. We have talked with some of you and surveyed the larger Pathways Partners (stakeholders) group to learn about some of the great initiatives that are helping us move towards these outcomes. We heard from you that work on children's social-emotional health has really started to "move" in NC in that last few years, thanks to some great people and increased understanding of the importance of social-emotional health to children's success. Here is what we have learned, themed into major categories.

#### Screening

- ABCD Quality Improvement committee is talking about how to engage pediatricians and primary care providers in screening for general child behavioral issues, more specific social-emotional needs, social determinants of health, maternal depression, and parental strengths, and then talking systematically with parents about those results. This has recently been done successfully in other states.
- Early intervention is moving toward asking all families about social determinants of health as part of the screening process.
- Adopting a social determinants of health screening instrument to use to evaluate women during prenatal care and developing a way for the pregnant women who attend the health department clinic and private obstetrician clinics to fill out the instrument and assure that instrument gets to the pediatricians after birth. This way, we have multiple chances to identify at-risk families and link them with valuable support services such as Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) and Early Head Start.

### Educating and Engaging Families

- Project Enlightenment is an early childhood education and intervention program of the Wake County Public School System, serving teachers and parents of young children, ages birth through kindergarten.
- Reach Out and Read supports pediatricians in talking with parents of young children about reading together and building positive parent-child interactions.
- A community-wide effort to improve school readiness/early literacy. We will try to give the mother's a special book during pregnancy to reinforce the importance of face-to-face talking/reading with babies and young children. This will be complementary to our Reach Out and Read Program. Our public schools, Head Start agency, public library, and Partnership for Children are working with us on this effort. (Goldsboro Pediatrics and Wayne County)
- Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) are community-based advisory groups where local service providers and parents work together to make sure that all families know about early intervention services.

### Supporting Families

- NC is partnering with Help Me Grow, a national model that is a comprehensive, coordinated system to advance early identification of developmental and behavioral issues and promote referral to needed services. The key component of Help Me Grow is a single phone number families can call to connect with community resources, as well as child health care provider outreach, community outreach, and data collection.
- There is work being done on expanding evidence-based home visiting and parent education programs across the state and mapping where programs exist. (NC DPH and others)
- NC 2-1-1 is an information and referral service for parents.
- Community Action Targeting Children Who Are Homeless (CATCH) is a collaborative community project designed to enhance the mental health and development of children experiencing family homelessness.
- The Smart Start network works to support the whole child in the context of the family.
- The Family Support Network™ of North Carolina (fsnc.org) enhances the lives of children who have special needs by providing support, education, and caring connections to their families. The network includes 11 regional affiliates and the FSN University Office. FSN affiliates provide parent-to-parent support, information and referral, support groups, workshops, and social activities for families with children (birth – age 22) who have disabilities or special needs and their service providers statewide. The FSN University office provides statewide information and referral for families with children who have special needs and service providers across North Carolina.
- Some NC cities are establishing paid parental and family leave for public employees.
- Paid Family Leave: A diverse advisory group composed of business, pediatricians, economics professors and other researchers, public sector agencies (e.g., Dept of Insurance), and child and family advocates is working to design a study on Paid Family Leave Insurance programs (outcomes, cost-benefit, impact on business, infrastructure needed) and how NC could implement such a program. Recommendations will be

presented to the Child Fatality Task Force in October, and the Advisory Committee is looking at sources of funding and researchers to conduct the study. (NC Child, Child Fatality Task Force, MomsRising)

- A system of food banks across the state improve families' food security.
- Work is happening to expand the universal breakfast program in NC schools (NCAE and The Budget and Tax Center)
- Healthy Corner Store Initiative is working to improve food security. (The NC Alliance for Health)