Early Childhood Mental Health: What You (and your staff) Need to Know

Inclusion Institute 2017
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Workforce Development Project

Developing a system of Social-Emotional Competencies to support North Carolina’s early childhood workforce
NC Institute of Medicine Study

Growing Up Well: Supporting Young Children’s Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health (2012)

Recommendation 2.5:

Develop the workforce that provides social-emotional and mental health supports and services
Need for System of ECMH Competencies

• Sheer number of cross discipline professions that work with children

• Paucity of specialized training regarding mental health needs of children age 0-5

• Lack of child development knowledge
NCIMHA ECMH Competencies
Provider Categories

Core Provider Category 1:
  • Any person working with young children and their families

Core Provider Category 2:
  • Bachelor degree or equivalent -- providers working with children and families in a non-clinical setting or in a supportive role

Core Provider Category 3:
  • Advanced degree -- providers work with children in a clinical setting
NCIMHA ECMH Competencies
Eight Domains

1. Parenting, Caregiving, Family Functioning and Parent-Child Relationships
2. Child Development: Infant, Toddler and Preschool Age
3. Biological and Psychosocial Factors Impacting Outcomes
4. Risk and Resiliency
NCIMHA ECMH Competencies
Eight Domains

5. Observation, Screening and Assessment
6. Diagnosis and Intervention
7. Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary collaboration
8. Ethics
Example of Competency Domain Across Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Area</th>
<th>Category 1 Any person working with young children and their families</th>
<th>Category 2 BA or equivalent; non clinical setting or a supportive role</th>
<th>Category 3 Masters degree; licensed mental health therapist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Development</td>
<td>Recognizes and respects how different settings where children spend time including childcare, playgroups, and home may affect the child’s behavior</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of the impact of environment on behavior at all stages of development</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of social-emotional development and the role of peer and group interactions as it relates to child behavior and can utilize a range of strategies for promoting optimal interactions</td>
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Applying the Competencies: Crosswalk with NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development

### 2. Child Development: Infant, Toddler and Preschool Age Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addresses knowledge of...</th>
<th>Any person working with young children and their families (Workforce Category 1) should be able to...</th>
<th>Foundations address this area with these goals...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Typical development in infancy, toddler and/or preschool periods | a. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of healthy relationships for healthy development.  
   b. Demonstrate an understanding of typical development including: language motor, sensory, adaptive self-help, cognition, and social & emotional (including capacity to play and interact with others).  
   c. Recognizes and respects how different settings where children spend time including child care, play groups, and home may affect children’s behavior. | ▪ Children engage in increasingly complex play. (APL-3)  
▪ Children demonstrate a positive sense of self-identity and self-awareness. (ESD-1)  
▪ Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (ESD-4)  
▪ Children demonstrate the social and behavioral skills needed to successfully participate in groups. (ESD-5)  
▪ Children recognize and respond to the needs and feelings of others. (ESD-7)  
▪ Children demonstrate knowledge of |
ECMH Professional Development

E-Modules

• Encouraging Connections (Dr. Betty Rintoul)
• NC Infant Mental Health Association
• NC Department of Health and Human Services’ Division of Child Development and Early Education
• NC Department of Public Instruction’s Office of Early Learning and Division of Exceptional Children
• NC Early Learning Network housed at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, UNC-Chapel Hill
ECMH Professional Development
E-Modules

• Introduce ECMH competencies to Category 1 providers (any person working with young children and their families)

• Include the broad audience of early care and education providers

• Awareness and use of knowledge, attitudes and skills for effective, trauma informed, and developmentally appropriate care
ECMH Professional Development
E-Modules

• Three one-hour training modules, in an on-line training format

• Additional two modules on the role of parents and caregivers in buffering stress
  – Particularly for children who have experienced toxic stress
The Modules

- Early Brain Development and Self-Regulation
- Toxic Stress and Early Brain Development
- Building Resilience Through Early Relationships

http://modules.nceln.fpg.unc.edu/early-childhood-mental-health-modules
Early Brain Development and Self-Regulation

• Early childhood mental health = social emotional functioning
• 0-5 lays basic foundation
• 3-part brain model – hierarchal “inside-out” development
• Brain connections form in response to experiences
• Pruning of under-used connections
• Emotion & human interactions especially influential
• Self-regulation results from effective communication between limbic & cortex (emotion and thought)
Toxic Stress and Early Brain Development

- The stress response and physical impact
- Kinds of stress: positive, tolerable, & toxic
- Key component of toxic stress is lack of caregiver connection & support
- Adverse effects of toxic stress in childhood
- How chronic, unrelieved stress “resets” the stress response
- Research regarding prevalence of mental health and developmental problems in children experiencing toxic stress
- Presence of nurturing caregivers in ALL settings can protect children from negative impact of stress
Building Resilience Through Early Relationships

- Resilience = ability to “bounce back” from difficult experiences
- Social emotional skills that promote resilience, school readiness & life success
- Qualities of caregiving that are related to positive & negative child outcomes
- How self-regulation/cortical skills develop through mutual regulation with a supportive caregiver
Building Resilience Through Early Relationships

- Serve and return as a model for responsive interaction
- Interactions that lead to secure attachment relationships
- Importance of emotion and limbic communication in connecting with a child and forming supportive attachments and examples
- Positivity ratio of 3 to 1
- Building emotional connection through daily routines and responsive interaction
- Caregivers, as well as parents, can affect a child’s development through their interactions
Supplemental Materials

ECMH Module Guide: Introduction
Supporting materials for Professional Development Providers

This guide provides supplemental material for PD providers (coaches, mentors, directors, instructors, etc.) using the ECMH Modules to teach this important content about early brain development and the impact of toxic stress and to support implementation of evidence-based practices that give infants and young children experiences that build resilience through relationships.

Instructors: The activities and materials provided may be used to support the learners’ active engagement in face to face instruction and the instructors’ ability to assess student learning. Suggestions are offered about where such might be used, but instructors are encouraged to consider alternative ways to use the materials.

Other PD providers: The activities can be easily adapted for use by coaches, mentors, directors, etc. who may be able to provide on-site help. For each activity, suggestions are provided for how materials may be used to support learners as they complete the online modules to transfer learning to practice in their workplace settings.
Let’s Preview the Modules!

http://unc-fpg-cdi.adobeconnect.com/mhmod1/
Taxonomy of a System of Care

Continuous Quality Improvement
collaboration, integration, measurement, benchmarking & feedback
Community Collaborative- The Alamance Alliance

Programs, Organizations and Culture

Memorandum of Understanding
The Structure of the System

- Early Learning
- Health, Mental Health, And Nutrition
- Special Needs, Early Intervention
- Family Support

Community Collaborative
Family Support

Early Learning

Health, Mental Health, And Nutrition

Special Needs, Early Intervention

Family Support

Early care & educational opportunities in nurturing environments provided by well equipped Category I and II providers
Early Learning

Health, Mental Health, And Nutrition

Special Needs, Early Intervention

Family Support

Early care & educational opportunities in nurturing environments provided by well equipped providers

Parenting supports to ensure that children have nurturing adult care-giver relationships
Family Support

Early Learning

Health, Mental Health, And Nutrition

Special Needs, Early Intervention

Early care & educational opportunities in nurturing environments provided by well equipped providers

Parenting supports to ensure that children have nurturing relationships adult care-givers

Early identification & assessment & appropriate services for health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays
Family Support
Early Learning
Health, Mental Health, And Nutrition
Special Needs, Early Intervention

Comprehensive services that meet children’s health (vision, hearing, nutrition) & mental health (behavioral) needs

Early care & educational opportunities in nurturing environments provided by well equipped providers

Parenting supports to ensure that children have nurturing relationships adult care-givers

Early identification & assessment & appropriate services for health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays
Train the Trainer Format & Self-Paced On-line modules

http://modules.nceln.fpg.unc.edu/foundations/module-intro
Education and the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant Workforce Category 3
• Link families to state and community partners for the purpose of improving the lives of children, youth, and families with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs;

• Actively promote, model and adhere to the values and principles of System of Care.

https://www.ncfamiliesunited.org/
Age birth-2
Early Intervention
ECMH screening

Development Evaluation

Early Intervention services

Universal referral form

ECMH referral from alliance source

Family support program

ECMH assessment licensed and trained in ECMH EBP

ECMH therapy and consultation services

Age 3-5
School Age system
ECMH screening

Development Evaluation

Special Education services

Protocols, Policies and Procedures
The future?

A take-away message!

Providing trauma informed/developmentally sensitive care is an appropriate and important role for anyone involved in providing services to children and their families.

Anyone providing services to children and their families can be a positive force in the healing process.