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**New CQI Collaborative Seeks to Support Child Development**

FL MIECHV sites came together February 23-24 for the opening learning session of the new state CQI collaborative, **Supporting Child Development**. The goal of the collaborative is to achieve a statewide rate of 90% for timely ASQ screening and referral, if needed.

Local teams worked to develop 90 day AILMs and formulated strategies to test for improving screening, referral and follow-up.

- **Parent advocate Talethia Edwards** encouraged participants to value parents as experts on their child’s health and development.
- Local teams also learned about the research behind brain development and the importance of early intervention. Several teams included staff from Early Steps, the state Part C IDEA program.
- Resources for supporting home visitors and parents, including **Learn the Signs - Act Early**, **Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive**, and **Vroom**, were shared with local teams.
- Participants also had a chance to experience developmental screening as they administered an "ASQ for Grown-Ups" on each other during a fun, interactive exercise.
- Local teams will submit plans for Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles monthly, along with data charting progress in improving ASQ screening, referral and follow-up. The CQI effort focuses on key federal performance measures for the national home visiting initiative.

**FL Recognized For Improvements**

The FL MIECHV initiative was recognized by HRSA for achieving improvement in five of six benchmark areas after three years of implementation. The determination was made following review of performance data submitted this fall.

Federal legislation requires MIECHV grantees to demonstrate improvement in at least four of the six benchmark areas after three years. Grantees must show improvement in at least half of the constructs under each benchmark area. FL MIECHV achieved improvements in Maternal & Child Health; Child Safety; School Readiness; Reducing Violence, and Coordination & Referral.

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**2016 Kids Count: Florida Continues to Lag in Measures of Child Health, Well-Being**

Florida’s children continue to lag behind children in other parts of the country in key measures of health, economic and social well-being.

According to the recently released 2016 Florida Kids Count County Database, the state ranks 40 out of 50 states and faces its biggest challenges in addressing poverty and improving child health.

The need to focus on prevention, including continued investment in programs that promote prenatal care, nutrition and parent education, as well as home visiting, is underscored in the report.

The report notes that the proportion of children living in poverty continues to rise in the state despite the economic recovery. One out of four children in Florida live in poverty. The state also has a greater proportion of children who are uninsured compared to other states.

The databook is produced by Florida KIDS COUNT (FKC) at the USF Department of Child & Family Studies at the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, part of the KIDS COUNT network of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
As many as one in four children through the age of five are at risk for a developmental delay or disability. In 2015-16, 19% of families who enrolled in FL MIECHV-funded home visiting programs had a child with developmental delays or disabilities.

Early identification of developmental issues is key to early intervention in children under age 3 and can prevent the need for more costly special education services in later childhood.

Home visitors play an important role in screening and referral, as well as supporting parents in monitoring achievement of developmental milestones by their children. MIECHV Performance Measures 12 and 18 outline expectations for developmental screening and addressing any identified developmental delays or concerns. In addition to any ASQ intervals required by the home visiting program model, MIECHV requires that home visitors administer the 10, 18, and 30 month Ages & Stages (ASQ-3) questionnaires on all enrolled children, consistent with the screening schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

For children with ASQ scores below the cut-off, home visitors are expected to offer a referral to Early Steps within seven days. Referrals to other community services may also be appropriate and home visitors should provide in-home developmental support activities that address any areas of concern. Children who are referred for early intervention are expected to receive an evaluation within 45 days of referral; those referred to other community services are expected to receive services within 30 days. Home visitors are responsible for following up to ensure families are connected to and receiving the care they need.

In addition to identifying and referring children with delays, home visitors provide important support for families whose children are developing appropriately by sharing information on milestones and activities parents can use to promote healthy child development.

FL MIECHV sites are participating in a new CQI Learning Collaborative to promote developmental screening and referral (see page 1) and achievement of the performance measures. Additionally, the FL ECCS Impact project is supporting systems development in two place-based communities around developmental screening and linkage to needed services (see below).

Focus on Developmental Screening & Referral

The early childhood system needs more glue rather than more programs — that observation by Dr. Frank Oberklaid, Foundation Director of the Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children’s Hospital of Australia, framed the work of the new ECCS Impact Collaborative Improvement & Innovation Network (CoIIN) at its opening meeting held recently in Virginia.

Florida is one of 12 states participating in the national initiative to strengthen state and local systems for supporting developmental screening and services for children birth to five.

FL ECCS Impact teams representing the state, Miami Children’s Initiative in Liberty City and Jacksonville’s New Town Success Zone participated with other grantees in the kick-off learning session.

FL team member and parent advocate, Talethia Edwards, (pictured) was a featured speaker at the conference and shared her perspective as a mother who has sought services for her children. Allison Parish, FL MIECHV senior manager, also presented on the state’s success in using CQI to improve screening, safety planning and referral by home visiting programs for intimate partner violence (IPV).

The ECCS Impact CoIIN will use the Model for Improvement developed by the Associates in Process Improvement (API) to guide efforts aimed at improving coordination of screening and referral services among different providers that touch families with young children. State and local partners include FL MIECHV and other home visiting programs, Help Me Grow, Early Steps, Early Learning Coalitions and child care providers, consumers and other community representatives.

States and communities will work together for the next five years with a goal of showing a 25% improvement in developmental outcomes among three-year-olds.

ECCS Impact Teams Advised to Create “the Glue”

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Florida One of Eight States Selected for New Infant Mental Health Community of Practice

Florida is one of eight states selected recently to participate in a new virtual Community of Practice (CoP) on enhancing mental health capacity in home visiting. Organized by Zero to Three and funded by the Alliance for Early Success, the learning collaborative will offer states technical assistance and support aimed at strengthening the ability of home visiting staff to identify and address parent mental health issues such as maternal depression, substance abuse and anxiety, as well as assist families in promoting the social-emotional development of their children.

Technical assistance provided through the CoP will be used in Florida to develop plans for a partnership project between Florida MIECHV, the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH) and Early Steps piloting Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/EMHC) in three areas of the state.

The I/EMHC pilot is one of three strategies currently being implemented by Florida MIECHV to address the unmet mental health needs of at-risk families served in early childhood programs. Other efforts focus on building state capacity to deliver two evidence-based treatment and prevention models — Moving Beyond Depression and the Mothers and Babies program — through home visiting.

Florida CoP team members include: Allison Parish, FL MIECHV Senior Manager and team lead; Dr. Mimi Graham, Director, FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy; Lily Wells, Director, Project LAUNCH; Florida Department of Children & Families; Lisa Negrini, COO of the Family Study Center at USF, St. Petersburg and President of FAIMH; and, Kim Porter, Program Consultant for Early Steps, IDEA Part C, at the Florida Department of Health.

Community teams are testing and refining their plans for coordinated intake and referral based on their success in linking eligible families to home visiting programs. Efforts are led by Healthy Start Coalitions in Bay, Franklin, Gulf, Jefferson, Madison & Taylor, Northeast Florida; Orlando, Osceola & Seminole; Hillsborough; Flagler-Volusia; Manatee, and North Central Florida.

Teams have worked with local partners to develop service inventories and agreements, decision trees, awareness & education material for families, referral tracking systems, and related services. Efforts are funded sites, USF S.

Nearly 30 home visitors and supervisors from FL MIECHV-funded sites, USF evaluation staff and other partners recently participated in an opening retreat on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

Recognizing the stress inherent in serving high-need families and the importance of self-care, FL MIECHV is partnering with the UF Health Integrative Medicine Program to offer MBSR to home visiting staff. The program consists of eight self-paced modules (completed weekly) and two half-day retreats with expert UF staff.

Participants learn and practice mindfulness skills that will mobilize their inner resources to benefit both themselves and the families they serve in key areas, such as healthy communications and attitudes, empathy, gratitude, emotional self-regulation, and a healthy work environment.

The retreat was facilitated by Nancy Lasserer, Ed.S, LMHC, Wellness Educator for the Center and certified MBSR trainer. A second cohort of home visiting staff will begin MBSR training in March.

Joy Burkhard, Dr. Connie Guille Keynote Speakers

At Maternal Mental Health Conference April 8

Joy Burkhard, MBA, founder and executive director of 2020 Mom, a national advocacy group working to address what it terms the country’s “silent maternal mental health crisis,” and Dr. Connie Guille, a specialist in perinatal psychiatry at the Medical University of South Carolina will keynote the Second Annual Maternal Mental Health Conference April 8 in Daytona. The conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wyndom Grand Orlando Resort. Registration fee is $50. CEUs will be provided.

The theme of the 2017 conference is “A Call to Action for Florida.” The conference is sponsored by The Florida Maternal Mental Health Collaborative and the Alachua County Perinatal Mental Health Coalition, host of the inaugural conference last year.

The goal of the conference is to exchange information, forge collaboration, and increase awareness about maternal mental health needs in the state. Medical and clinical providers, researchers, advocates and other working with families are encouraged to attend. For more information contact: Lauren DePaola, ACMHIC@gmail.com.

CI&R Teams Pilot Local Plans for Linking Families

Community teams are testing and refining their plans for coordinated intake and referral based on their success in linking eligible families to home visiting programs. Efforts are led by Healthy Start Coalitions in Bay, Franklin, Gulf, Jefferson, Madison & Taylor, Northeast Florida; Orlando, Osceola & Seminole; Hillsborough; Flagler-Volusia; Manatee, and North Central Florida.

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Home visitors practiced guided meditation, mindful movement, and walking meditation at the recent Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) retreat led by the UF Center for Integrative Medicine in Gainesville.

ABOUT FLORIDA MIECHV

Florida is implementing the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Initiative through a public-private partnership. Led by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, Inc., the goal of the initiative is to improve health & developmental outcomes for at-risk children through evidence-based home visiting programs. State implementation partners include the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy, and USF Lawton & Rhea Chiles Center. For more information contact Carol Brady, Project Director, cbrady@fahsc.org or visit www.FLMIECHV.com.

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